Eurasian Empires in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

Contact and Exchange between the Graeco-Roman World, Inner Asia and China

Edited by Hyun Jin Kim, Frederik Juliaan Vervaet and Selim Ferruh Adalı

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The great empires of the vast Eurasian continent have captured the imagination of many. Awe-inspiring names such as ancient Rome, Han and Tang China, Persia, Assyria, the Huns, the Kushans and the Franks have been the subject of countless scholarly books and works of literature. However, very rarely, if at all, have these vast pre-industrial empires been studied holistically from a comparative, interdisciplinary and above all Eurasian perspective. This collection of studies examines the history, literature and archaeology of these empires and others thus far treated separately as a single inter-connected subject of inquiry. It highlights in particular the critical role of Inner Asian empires and peoples in facilitating contacts and exchange across the Eurasian continent in antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

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In fond memory of Antonio 'Tony' Sagona,
Optimus conlega, friend and mentor.

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Introduction

HYUN JIN KIM AND FREDERIK JULIAAN VERVAET

The vast continent of Eurasia with its diverse cultures and civilizations has produced some of the most famous and geographically expansive empires in the history of humanity. In the twentieth century, the remarkable global predominance of contemporary Eurasian political powers inspired geopolitical[1] speculations identifying the continent as the 'world island', asserting that whoever dominated continental Eurasia would rule the world.[2] If the significance of Eurasian powers as geopolitical entities in modern history is widely acknowledged, it may also be pertinent to look into the pre-industrial predecessors of these Eurasian superpowers and their tremendous and lasting political and cultural legacies.

This book seeks to explore from a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective the history and archaeology of the Ancient and Early Medieval empires that once dominated the vast landmass of Eurasia. In particular, though not exclusively, three imperial traditions will be compared to facilitate in-depth analysis: the Greco-Roman imperial tradition, the imperial tradition of early China and the imperial tradition of ancient Inner Asia, the legacies of which continue to influence historical realities of today. The book will highlight both the similarities and the differences between these imperial traditions with a thematic focus on the political, socio-institutional and cultural aspects of Eurasian Empires and identify key historical links, connectivity and influences between East and West via the examination of historical, literary and archaeological evidence. We must also note here in the introduction that we define an 'empire' as 'a political formation that extended far beyond its original territorial or ethnic confines and embraced, by direct conquest or by the imposition of its political authority, a variety of peoples and lands that may have had different types of relations with the imperial center, constituted by an imperial clan and by its charismatic leader'.[3]

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[1] For a nuanced introduction to geopolitics in world history, see Grygiel 2006: 21–39. For a more controversial assessment of current geopolitical speculations, see Kaplan 2012.
[2] First contrived by Mackinder 1904: 421–39, revisited by Brzezinski 1997: 30–56.
[3] Di Cosmo 2011: 44–5.

Over the past decade comparative studies of Ancient Greece and Early China and also Imperial Rome and Han China have enjoyed great popularity. The momentum was arguably first started by the great pioneering publications of G.E.R. Lloyd[4] who has written prolifically on Greece and China, focusing specifically on the comparative studies of Greek and Chinese science, medicine and philosophy. Interest in Greece and China then expanded into other fields of inquiry. Hyun Jin Kim published a comparative study of Greek and Chinese ethnography[5] and Alexander Beecroft produced an innovative comparative study of Greek and Chinese authorship and poetry[6] (both scholars are contributing chapters to this current volume). Deserving of mention also is the excellent study by Yiqun Zhou on the role of women and gender in ancient Greece and China.[7] The comparative study of imperial Rome and Han China was pioneered by Walter Scheidel[8] (who is also contributing a chapter to this volume and has developed a very useful paradigm for comparing imperial cultures in antiquity, which partially informs this current volume) and by the excellent publications of Mutschler and Mittag.[9] Scheidel's edited volume on Rome and China has furthermore brought attention to the importance of socio-institutional aspects of comparative inquiry.[10]

These pioneering works of scholarship arguably set the stage for the next phase of comparative research. The one methodological weakness that could potentially undermine the value of comparative research on Greece-Rome and China was its inability to identify sufficiently the points of contact, interactions and mutual influence between the two civilizational spheres. In

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[4] The most noteworthy of Lloyd's publications, among many others, are: Lloyd 1996, 2002, 2004, 2005. Also worthy of attention is the publication Lloyd and Sivin 2002.

[5] Kim 2009.

[6] Beecroft 2010.

[7] Zhou 2010. Mention must also be made of the pioneering work of Lisa Raphals 1992; also her more recent publication in 2013; of Hall and Ames 1995; and Mu-chou Poo's superb study on the representation of foreigners in ancient China and the Near East 2005. Other notable works on Greece and China include Lu 1998; Kuriyama 1999; Schaberg 1999; Jullien 2000; Shankman and Durrant 2000, 2002; Reding 2004; Sim 2007; Yu 2007; King and Schilling 2011; Denecke 2014. For a comprehensive review of the publications on Greece and China, see also Tanner 2009: 89–109.

[8] Scheidel 2015 and the groundbreaking Scheidel 2009.

[9] Mutschler and Mittag 2008. See also Mutschler 1997: 213–53; 2003: 33–54; 2006: 115–35; 2007: 127–52; 2008: 123–55. Other published works on Rome and China include Auyang 2014; Lorenz 1990: 9–60; Motomura 1991: 61–9; Dettenhofer 2006: 880–97.

[10] Also deserving of mention are the projects currently being undertaken by Mu-chou Poo on the comparative studies of ancient religions in Greece, Rome and China (under contract with Oxford University Press) and by Han Beck and Griet Vankeerberghen on citizens and commoners in Greece, Rome and China.

order to remedy this problem it is necessary to look at what lies between the Mediterranean and the Zhongyuan: the steppes of Inner Asia. The fabled 'Silk Road' and Inner Asia have enjoyed a renaissance of scholarly interest in recent decades, and one of the principal proponents of research in this field, Samuel N.C. Lieu (who is also authoring one of the chapters of this volume), has highlighted the points of contact between Rome, Iran, Inner Asia and China via his research on the role of Manichaeism in the transmission of ideas and cultural traits across Eurasia.[11] Another outstanding contributor to this reinvigoration of interest in Inner Asia has been the great Peter Golden whose scholarship on Inner Asia has become the standard of research in this field of inquiry.[12]

All of this prior scholarship has now made it possible for us to conduct this current comparative analysis, which aims to bring together scholarship on every major region of Eurasia (the Mediterranean, Western Europe, the Middle East, Inner Asia, South Asia, Iran and China) and reassess them all from a holistic, truly Eurasian perspective.[13] The studies of Eurasian empires have frequently in the past suffered from narrow departmentalization and compartmentalization. It is a major contention of this book that political, socio-institutional and cultural developments within Eurasian empires during antiquity and the early middle ages can only be fully understood and appreciated, if we adopt this holistic Eurasian perspective mentioned above. In particular, Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (the period which concerns many of the chapters in this volume) was a time when the political, socio-institutional and cultural transformations across the whole of Eurasia were precipitated by the expansion of steppe peoples from Inner Eurasia. The entirety of the Eurasian continent was affected by this geopolitical phenomenon and only a holistic approach that combines the knowledge of the history, philology and archaeology of all Eurasian

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[11]   Most significantly among his voluminous publications: Lieu 1992.

[12]   See in particular Golden 1992. Later publications that have utilized sources (both primary and secondary) in Chinese, Inner Asian and Greco-Roman historiography have been inspired by Golden's seminal works, e.g. Kim 2013. We must also mention here the extraordinary publication of Bemmann and Schmauder 2015, which has highlighted the complexity of interaction in Inner Asia and its steppe zone in the first millennium CE. Also worthy of note is Nicola Di Cosmo's and Michael Maas' upcoming publication with Cambridge University Press, *Eurasian Empires in Late Antiquity: Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe*, which shares a similar outlook with this current volume, but focuses more specifically on Late Antiquity.

[13]   From the outset it is important to stress that references to 'Eurasia' and 'Eurasian' in this volume are purely indicative of the geographical and historical reality, which necessitates treating 'European' history and 'Asian' history together as a single research discipline. The terminology used is therefore devoid of any political ideology and has nothing to do with Russian 'Eurasianism'. See Laruelle 2008.

sub-regions can accurately assess the impact of such a cataclysmic geopolitical revolution.

This book is arguably the first ever attempt to approach the political, socio-institutional and cultural history of Eurasian empires in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages together with such a holistic perspective, while at the same time combining these observations with new comparative analyses on Greece-Rome and imperial China.[14] Furthermore, this volume seeks to utilize not just historical and philological perspectives, but also archaeological insights. It is only when we combine all three approaches that we can minimize the tendency to both inflate and deflate the importance of the individual imperial states in Eurasia in comparison to the others, while accurately assessing the impact and influence of one on the other or vice versa. This comprehensive approach, we believe, provides a more rigorous methodological paradigm for both assessing and analysing the history, development and legacy of Eurasian empires in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.

This book does not have the aim of conducting research on every aspect of the three imperial traditions mentioned above, but rather seeks to focus on several key aspects which illuminate the inter-connectivity and shared characteristics of imperial societies and polities in ancient and medieval Eurasia. The book is thus divided into four separate sections, each focusing on one of these key areas of inquiry.

The first section focuses on the political organization of and interactions between Eurasian empires of Antiquity and early Middle Ages. There are three chapters, which will all address the common theme of interaction between Inner Asian steppe empires/peoples and sedentary empires of Eurasia in Europe, China and the Middle East respectively to allow for a holistic Eurasian approach as our title implies. All three chapters will also discuss to varying degrees the impact of those interactions on the political organization, internal affairs and foreign policy of the empires concerned.

In the first chapter of this section Hyun Jin Kim discusses the impact of the famous Huns and their Eurasian Hunnic Empire on the political organization of the Frankish Merovingian kingdom(s)/empire. In the fourth and fifth centuries CE all the peripheral regions of Eurasia – the Mediterranean, Iran, India and China – collectively experienced the phenomenon of invasions and settlement by Inner Asians, most commonly called the Huns (Xiongnu and Xianbei in the Chinese context). The chapter highlights how

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[14]   The brilliant work of Canepa 2010 has achieved a similar result on the subjects of Art History and visual cultures.

the Huns of Europe inherited the Inner Asian brand of 'quasi-feudal' political organization from the Xiongnu and other earlier Inner Asian state entities and then transferred elements of that state model/political model to the Franks of Early Medieval Europe. The eruption of Inner Asians (mainly Huns, but also Alans[15]) into Europe and also other regions of Eurasia marked the end of the 'Ancient World' and the beginning of a 'new world order' in which Inner Asia, the geographical centre of Eurasia, also assumed the mantle of the cultural and political centre of this immense continent during the millennium which we now call the 'Middle Ages'.

The second chapter, by Jonathan Karam Skaff, discusses the impact of Inner Asia–periphery interactions at the other end of Eurasia, in East Asia. It examines the importance of horse power for China during the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) and by extension the involvement of Inner Asians (during much of this period mainly the Göktürks, dominant power in Inner Asia between the sixth–eighth centuries CE (the successors of the Huns/Xiongnu[16] and Rouran, the latter formed from the union of the remaining Xiongnu, Xianbei and also possibly the Wuhuan tribes in Mongolia[17]), but involving also other Inner Asians) in China's borderland breeding ranch system. Rather than viewing the steppe peoples and the Chinese Tang Empire as political opposites and irreconcilable antithetical entities locked in a fierce existential struggle for supremacy, Skaff through a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the entangled history of the two regions (Inner Asia and China) demonstrates the points of contact, mutual recognition and influence, and the remarkable integration of steppe peoples in China. The two groups (Inner Asians and the Chinese of the Tang) in effect had a virtual symbiotic relationship and the chapter demonstrates effectively how crucial Inner Asia was to the maintenance of Tang imperial power.

In the third chapter, by Selim Ferruh Adalı, the early impact of Inner Asians on yet another important region of Eurasia, the Middle East, is discussed. Adalı brings to the fore the little-known saga of the Cimmerian and Scythian invasions of northern West Asia and their impact on the political configuration of the Ancient Near East. The military intrusions of the Cimmerians and the Scythians were one of the key factors in the dissolution of the mighty Neo-Assyrian Empire of the Middle East, the first superpower of Antiquity. One could even argue that the Cimmerian-Scythian invasions were a precursor to the later Hunnic invasions which brought

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[15] For the entry of the Inner Asian Alans into Europe and their subsequent history, see Bachrach 1973 and also Alemany 2000.

[16] For the Huns-Xiongnu identification, see La Vaissière 2005: 3–26.

[17] See Kim 2013: 39.

low yet another superpower of the age, imperial Rome. Adalı demonstrates how these early Inner Asians not only caused the dissolution of established states and the reconfiguration of the political map of West Asia but also, just as much as the Assyrians, set the imperial precedent for the unification of West Asia under a single hegemonic power.

The next part of this volume considers some major socio-institutional aspects. The first two chapters offer incisive and novel analyses of the aristocratic concepts of honour, pride and shame in the roughly contemporary ancient societies of republican and early imperial Rome and Han China and constitute a diptych of sorts, laying the foundation for further comparative reflection and inquiry. The behaviour, mores and composition of the elite in both these imperial societies were determined to a large extent by how they defined honour and shame.[18] It will be argued that these definitions and applications of the system of honour and shame had significant political and socio-institutional ramifications in both empires. The third chapter then discusses the exploitation by these elites and also by the two imperial state governments of those who were excluded from the above-mentioned honour system: the peasantry, convicts and slaves.

Frederik Juliaan Vervaet sets the stage with a chapter surveying the workings and impact of honour and shame in the middle and late Roman Republic, the formative period of what would become the Roman Empire from 45 BCE onward.[19] Whilst economic interest and the geopolitical competition for resources mostly determine public policy and political decision-making in contemporary advanced societies, competing incentives of a very different nature often prevailed in the Roman Republic (509–27 BCE). Vervaet's main aim is to demonstrate that honour, pride and shame were strong and pervasive forces in republican Rome: veritable cultural drivers of behaviour that significantly impacted on the functioning of its social, political and military institutions and often even determined the very course of history. Following some introductory remarks on the aristocratic nature of the Roman polity, Vervaet systematically documents the paramount role of honour and shame in the Roman family, the senatorial aristocracy and

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[18] Though the Roman Republic combined aristocratic, democratic and plutocratic features and thus was no Empire in the technical sense of the world, the bulk of the evidence discussed here derives from its imperialist and expansionist era, the period that saw the establishment of a sort of imperial Republic, projecting (in)direct hegemonic power across the entire Mediterranean. The subject of Roman republican imperialism generates ongoing scholarly debate but four studies continue to stand out: Harris 1979; Gruen 1984; Ferrary 1988; and Eckstein 2006.

[19] For an argument that measures taken in the spring of 45 BCE mark the beginning of imperial rule in Rome, at least in terms of public law, see Vervaet 2014: 223–39.

the powerful military, doing so by virtue of a distinctly empirical approach. The result is a refreshing new look at a so far overlooked aspect of Roman republican socio-institutional life.

This is mirrored by Mark Lewis' equally substantial, sweeping and insightful chapter on honour and shame in the age of the Chinese Han Dynasty (206–220 CE). This discussion first endeavours to redefine the honour/shame complex in the formative period of the Warring States era, which inherited a pre-imperial nobility with a predominantly military sense of honour and shame, marked by the extremes of victory and defeat. At the same time, however, emergent philosophical traditions developed their own distinctive code of what was honourable and shameful, adhering to a paradigm very different to that of the martial nobility. The chapter then shifts the focus to honour and violence in the Han. Whilst the strong military dimension of honour/shame largely disappeared, the gangster associations centred around the great nobles continued to define honour through the violence of vengeance and self-sacrifice – suicide as an honourable alternative for mutilating punishments or public executions. Concurrently, from the first century BCE, the rise of economically more independent and locally powerful families led to the last great development in the Han history of the honour/shame complex, creating a field of tension with leading members of the formal bureaucracy, who now cultivated the lofty ideal of dying for the sake of one's moral purity and righteousness as the apex of elite honour. Whereas Lewis' chapter thus highlights important differences with Roman republican and early imperial honour, there also emerge strong similarities and sound angles for further comparative inquiry.

Walter Scheidel then compares the extensive use of forced labour and slaves in imperial Rome and Han China. He demonstrates succinctly how both forms of labour exploitation (slavery and forced labour of 'free' individuals) by the elite and the state existed in both imperial contexts. However, it is noted that in Han China the greater centralization of state power and its dominance over the elite tended to restrict to a certain degree private slave use. Much more common in China was the exploitation by the state of forced labour of non-slaves in the form of either convict or conscript labour and even slave labour was largely used for state purposes rather than for personal use by aristocratic owners. In contrast in imperial Rome, where elite power was more unbridled and the state was basically the common property of the aristocratic elite, private slave use expanded together with the expansion of the Roman state. The extent of elite privilege in both imperial societies relative to the ability of the governing bureaucracy of the imperial state to rein in those privileges thus had significant ramifications

for the economic development and socio-institutional evolution of both empires.

In the third section we examine the cultural legacies of Eurasian empires. The two chapters in this section touch on the key issue of religious/semi-religious textual traditions within Eurasian empires. The first chapter discusses the semi-religious textual tradition: Homer and the Shi Jing, both of which enjoyed canonical status in Greece-Rome and China respectively. The second chapter focuses on Eurasian Manichaeism, the religious textual tradition which impacted three major Eurasian empires: China, Iran and Rome.

In the first chapter Alexander Beecroft discusses the role of Homer and the Shi Jing as imperial texts in the Hellenistic Greek world and China respectively. He highlights the instability of the textual tradition in both contexts, how these works of literature, both of which attained canonical status in their respective cultures, were reshaped and reinterpreted to suit the needs and agendas of the imperial society they came to represent and inform. By doing so Beecroft sheds an important light on the critical role of empire in the development of these textual traditions and our reception and understanding of these ancient texts. Both texts, which initially had little to do with the ethos of the imperial societies in which they were revered, were artificially (and in many cases very awkwardly) linked with the values and political understanding of the imperial state. They thus forcibly became an intrinsic part of the legacy of Eurasian empires.

In the second chapter Sam Lieu demonstrates the extraordinary scope of the pan-Eurasian religious movement that was Manichaeism. Its religious textual tradition permeated three imperial states. The ease with which this tradition managed to spread in all three empires: Sassanian Persia, Tang China and imperial Rome (and let us not forget the Uyghur Khaganate of Inner Asia also, whose elite actually adopted the religion as their own), speaks volumes about the interconnectivity of Eurasian empires. The persecutions that it periodically encountered in all three empires also bear witness to the existence of imperial competition and conflict which went hand in hand with mutual imitation, remarkable acculturation and vigorous exchange of ideas and cultural capital.

In the last section, on the archaeology of Eurasian empires, all three chapters discuss the theme of the interaction between the steppe world of Inner Asia and the sedentary world of Eurasia, how the archaeological record of so-called 'nomadic', 'barbarian' empires shows evidence of these contacts in material culture and settlement patterns.

In the first chapter of this section Antonio Sagona, Claudia Sagona and Aleksandra Michalewicz examine the archaeological evidence for the presence of Inner Asians (Alans and also possibly Huns) in Transcaucasia. Excavations in the Caucasus region, which constitute the important land-bridge between Europe, the steppes of Inner Asia and West Asia, provide an extraordinarily complex and intriguing set of material evidence for acculturation, cultural inter-mingling and population movements that accompanied the interactions between steppe empires/peoples and 'sedentary' states.

In the second chapter Osmund Bopearachchi discusses the fascinating material evidence for cultural and artistic interactions between the Inner Asian Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians and Kushans with the preceding Greco-Bactrian, Greco-Indian and also native Indian cultures of South Asia. The chapter demonstrates the extraordinary heterogeneity of Eurasian empires and their essentially pluralistic outlook. The empires of Inner Asian origin that took root in South Asia combined within their polity the cultural legacy and political traditions of the ancient Mediterranean, Iran, Inner Asia and India. Such diversity, which we do not instinctively identify with early imperial societies, was more the norm rather than the exception amongst ancient and medieval Eurasian empires.

In the last chapter Michelle Negus Cleary presents startling new archaeological evidence from Central Asia from a comparative perspective. She demonstrates the fallacy of the strict dichotomy of 'settled' and 'nomad' in Inner Asian and Iranian contexts. The impressive ancient fortified enclosures in historical Khwarezm (modern western Uzbekistan), an area associated with many historically significant imperial powers, most notably the Kangju, Huns and Achaemenid Persia, are shown to be not 'sedentary' settlements established by a 'settled' population, but rather political and ceremonial administrative facilities of Eurasian 'mobile' states constructed to legitimize the power of the ruling elite. These sites and also even the famous capitals of the Achaemenid Persian kings were not typical 'urban' settlements, but rather carefully designed symbols of royal power and prestige within imperial societies in which the political centre was the itinerant royal court and not a single location. The chapter brilliantly demonstrates via the examination of the most recent archaeological evidence the varied system of imperial governance across Eurasia and how the Inner Asian model of rule affected the role and function of 'capitals' in Ancient and Medieval Eurasia.

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Political Organization and Interactions of Eurasian Empires

1 | The Political Organization of Steppe Empires and their Contribution to Eurasian Interconnectivity: the Case of the Huns and Their Impact on the Frankish West

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Comparative studies of Eurasian empires in general are without a doubt a relatively recent phenomenon. The comparative analysis of the history and political organization of Eurasian empires of the fourth and fifth centuries CE in particular has never been seriously attempted. Yet, in these two centuries the various regions of the Eurasian continent China, Persia, India and Rome, underwent a similar experience, the invasion and settlement of Inner Asian peoples mostly called the Huns or Xiongnu. What was the impact of this near 'global' phenomenon? Purely wanton destruction, as traditional historiography has claimed, or was it the facilitation of interconnectivity, interaction and impetus for political transformation? As Skaff in Chapter 2 and Adalı in Chapter 3 of this volume also demonstrate clearly, it is now time to abandon the false dichotomy of the supposedly 'incompatible', 'barbarian' nomads versus 'civilized', 'sedentary' peoples paradigm and begin to appreciate the reality of 'entangled histories'.[1] The history of Antiquity and the so-called 'Middle Ages' could in fact arguably be described as the history of intense engagement and interaction between the Inner Asian world and the peripheries of Eurasia (China, Europe, India and Iran).[2]

This chapter will argue that Inner Asian steppe empires and peoples were the active facilitators of political innovation in Late Antique and Early Medieval Eurasia. The quasi-'feudal' (for want of a better term) system of political organization developed by Inner Asian peoples such as the Xiongnu/Huns and the Scythians/Saka may have had a significant impact on the political organization of the Tuoba Xianbei Northern Wei Empire of Northern China, the later Sassanian Empire of Persia and the Frankish Empire in Europe. Because of the lack of space available this chapter will

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[1] Gould 2007: 766.
[2] This chapter draws inspiration from the contents and conclusions of my two previous books on the Huns: Kim 2013; Kim 2015.

focus specifically on the political organization of the Xiongnu/Huns[3] and their impact on the development of incipient Frankish 'feudalism' in Western Europe.

In traditional historiography it has long been assumed (erroneously) that Inner Asia, from which the Huns of Europe originated, was a region of politically and culturally 'backward' peoples.[4] The Huns were thought to be politically 'primitive' with only rudimentary, if any at all, political organization in the mid-fourth century CE, when they first appear in our Greco-Roman records, and culturally backward (whatever that implies), a savage people with nothing to contribute to the development of European 'civilization'. This astonishingly flawed understanding of the political organization of the Hunnic Empire and the culture of the Huns in general largely stems from the partial acceptance and internalization of certain elements of the pseudo-ethnography on the Huns found in the work of the contemporary fourth century CE Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus. Numerous scholars in both Classics and Inner Asian Studies have repeatedly pointed out that Ammianus' account of Hunnic society belongs in the category of fairytales.[5] It is most certainly not fact-based ethnography or history. Yet, the myth of the 'primitive Huns' has proven to be surprisingly enduring both among the general reading public and even in academia.[6]

The fallacy of taking literally (or seriously) any of the fictitious descriptions of the Huns in Ammianus, has already been criticized and analysed in exhaustive detail by Maenchen-Helfen, Richter[7] and King. They have proven beyond any reasonable doubt that Ammianus' 'ethnography' on the Huns is based on much earlier Greco-Roman ethnography on steppe nomads. It is definitely not an eye-witness description of the contemporary

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[3] On the Hun-Xiongnu identification, see La Vaissière 2005: 3–26. See also Kim 2013: 26–9, for an extended summary of scholarship in support of the identification.

[4] For instance Kelly 2009, whose engaging book on the Huns, unfortunately uses the heading 'a backward steppe' as the title for one of its chapters (17–28).

[5] Maenchen-Helfen 1973: 9–15; King 1987: 77–95; Bona 1991: 41; Barnes 1998: 95–6; Haussig 2000: 257; etc. Maenchen-Helfen was highly critical when discussing the accuracy of Ammianus' descriptions of the Huns. He, however, was still inclined to believe that there was some historically valid information in Ammianus' pseudo-ethnography. This assessment is rightly rejected by King.

[6] Thompson 1948: 6–8; Heather 2009: 215–16; Halsall 2007: 171–2; and Matthews 1989: 332–42, 353, whose otherwise admirable works of scholarship have been led astray by the belief in the essential accuracy of Ammianus' portrait of a primitive Hunnic political community. This view, however, cannot be substantiated and is due to the neglect of the latest scholarly research on Central Asian history and archaeology which clearly shows that the Huns were a politically and culturally sophisticated people, far removed from the wanton savages that they are portrayed to be in the pages of Ammianus.

[7] Richter 1974: 343–77.

Huns and their political organization. There is therefore neither the need nor the space here in this chapter to demonstrate yet again the error of every detail of Ammianus' description in full. However, it is necessary to address further the long-standing supposition, ultimately derived from Ammianus, that the Hunnic Empire, because of its origin in the so-called 'primitive steppe', was merely a 'primitive tribal society', which could not have contributed anything to European political developments.

In current Inner Asian scholarship there is an unresolved debate on how one should classify early steppe empires such as the Xiongnu (in early Middle Chinese, possibly pronounced Hun-nu[8]). This debate is of particular importance because the Xiongnu provided the political model on which the Huns and other Inner Asian peoples later built their empires and states/proto-states. Although all Inner Asian specialists are in complete agreement on the reality of the existence of impressive political complexity within Inner Asian steppe empires, some argue that these Inner Asian empires were sophisticated super-complex tribal confederacies with imperial dimensions rather than actual 'supra-tribal' state entities.[9] The weight of the evidence, however, increasingly suggests that Inner Asian empires prior to the rise of the Huns achieved what could be termed statehood or an early form of statehood.[10]

That the Huns did not originate from a region mired in 'political backwardness' is amply demonstrated when we observe in greater detail the political system of the famous Xiongnu. The Xiongnu and other Inner Asians are frequently labelled nomads (a more accurate designation would be hybrid agro-pastoralists). This categorization as nomads, however, is an error, if we are equating nomadism with decentralization and absence of political order. The Xiongnu and other so-called 'nomad' polities possessed fixed territorial boundaries and excellent organizational capacity. For these 'nomads' regular movements under the control of an authoritative leadership and corresponding organization was essential for the survival of their community in a very fragile ecological environment and this necessity eventually contributed to the formation of tightly organized state entities capable of controlling vast territories in the steppes and adjacent regions.[11]

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[8] Golden 2009: 83.

[9] Kradin 2002; 2011.

[10] Krader 1978: 93–108; Di Cosmo 2011: 44–5. For discussion on what constitutes an 'early state', see Claessen and Skalnik 1978: 22–3 and also Scheidel 2011: 114. See also Khazanov 1984.

[11] See Barfield 1981: 59; Tapper 1991: 525; Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2006: 255–78, in particular 262.

This Inner Asian political model, for want of a better term, has been called quasi-feudal.[12] It was a hierarchical system concentrating power in the hands of an emperor called the Shanyu/Chanyu (單于, dàn-wà, representing darɣwa in Early Middle Chinese).[13] The central government, which the Shanyu/Chanyu headed, was in practice run by elite officials called the Gudu marquesses, who had the responsibility of managing relations between the central government and provincial governments within the Xiongnu Empire. To the East and West of the central government there were two preeminent kings (representing the two principal wings of the empire in a dual system[14]), the Wise King of the Left (ruler of the East with orientation to the South, usually the heir to the throne) and the Wise King of the Right (ruler of the West). Ranking right below these two kings were the Luli kings of the Left and Right, who together with the Wise Kings administered the four main subdivisions of the Xiongnu Empire. The four kings (the sons and brothers of the reigning emperor) constituted the so-called four horns and each was supported by his own administrative bureaucracy.[15] There were also six further kings labelled the six horns. They were the Rizhu kings of the Left and Right (titles also held exclusively, at least initially, by the sons and younger brothers of the Shanyu), Wenyuti kings of the Left and Right, and the Zhanjiang Kings of the Left and Right.[16]

The Xiongnu Empire also possessed twenty-four major provinces or governorships controlled by the twenty-four imperial leaders/ministers called 'Ten thousand Horsemen'.[17] These leaders usually consisted of members of the imperial clan and nobles of the three Xiongnu aristocratic clans.[18] For

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[12] de Crespigny 1984: 178; Pritsak 1954a: 239.

[13] Pulleyblank 2000: 64.

[14] Kradin 2011: 93 argues that there was originally a tripartite administrative system within the Xiongnu Empire that gradually evolved into a dual system.

[15] The four kings are called 'horns' in the *Hou Hanshu*, a Chinese source compiled in the fifth century CE recording the history of the Later Han Period (25–220 CE). See also Kradin 2011: 89; Christian 1998: 194; de Crespigny 1984: 176–7. The four superior kings reappear in later Hunnic contexts and are found among the Volga Bulgars (Hunnic descendants in Europe). See Pritsak 1954b: 379. The institution is also found among the Göktürks who ruled Inner Asia after the demise of the Huns and the Rouran Khaganate, see Pritsak 1954c: 186.

[16] *Hou Hanshu* 79. 2944. See also Kradin 2011: 92, and de Crespigny 1984: 177. Mori 1973: 22–3, argues that the six horns were added to the Xiongnu political system well after 97 BCE and was a feature specific to the Southern Xiongnu and not the original Xiongnu Empire. His view has been widely criticized and is based on the observation that these titles do not appear in the earlier *Shiji*. Less problematic is his observation (30–1) that the office of Rizhu kings was later transferred from members of the imperial clan to those of aristocratic Huyan clan who were related to the Chanyus by marriage. See also Brosseder and Miller 2011: 20.

[17] See Kürsat-Ahlers 1994: 276.

[18] Ishjamts 1994: 158; Kollautz and Miyakawa 1970: 44.

the government of the more distant regions under the suzerainty of the Xiongnu, e.g. the oasis cities of the Tarim basin, the Xiongnu allowed local rulers who had submitted to retain their positions under the supervision of the Xiongnu 'Commandant in charge of Slaves'. This overseer was himself placed under the supervision of the Xiongnu Rizhu king and as the head of both the civil and military administration of the locality had the power to tax local city-states and to conscript corvée labour.[19]

At the bottom of this highly complex administrative hierarchy there were subordinate tribal leaders who were issued titles such as sub-kings, prime ministers, chief commandants, household administrators, chü-ch'ü officals, and so on. They were placed under the rule of major Xiongnu governors, but could also at times exercise a degree of local autonomy, provided they efficiently collected their due taxes for the Xiongnu government.[20] A system of decimal ranks (thousands, hundreds, tens) was used to mobilize troops under a single command structure during times of war,[21] and censuses were also taken to determine the empire's reserve of manpower and livestock.[22]

A replica of this earlier highly elaborate political system is later found among the Huns in Europe in the fourth and fifth centuries CE. The Xiongnu system of appointing sub-kings under the authority of a paramount ruler is also a feature of the Hun system of government in Europe. We can note that king Uldin, the first Hunnic ruler to be named by our Greco-Roman sources, was a *regulus* (sub-king) and according to Olympiodorus the Hunnic sub-king Donatus was a vassal of his overlord ὁ τῶν ῥηγῶν πρῶτος (the first of the kings) Charaton.[23] The strict hierarchy that characterized the Xiongnu system discussed above was likewise the dominant feature of the Hun system. We learn that in one of the Hunnic subdivisions in the Ukraine, the Akatziri, their leader Kouridachus, who was senior in office (πρεσβύτερον ὄντα τῇ ἀρχῇ), was given his gifts second by the Roman ambassador by mistake. This was interpreted as a slight and denying Kouridachus the honours due to his rank (οὐ κατὰ τάξιν).[24] Later Attila the Hun appoints his eldest son Ellac as overlord of this rebellious eastern subdivision.[25] Ellac's

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[19] Yü 1990: 127–8.

[20] Barfield 1981: 48–9.

[21] Barfield 1981: 49. For archaeological evidence of this highly sophisticated social hierarchy among the Xiongnu, see Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2006: 264–5. See also Kürsat-Ahlers 1994: 289–90, for the importance of Xiongnu military organization in the formation of Xiongnu political administration.

[22] Christian 1998: 194.

[23] Olympiodorus fr. 19 (*Bibl. Cod.* 80, 173), Blockley 1983: 182.

[24] Priscus, fr. 11.2, Blockley 1983: 258.

[25] Ibid.

appointment to rulership over the Akatziri incidentally also shows the old Xiongnu practice of giving key 'fiefs'/ provinces to members of the royal family.[26] The Hunnic Empire disintegrated after the death of Attila because of an unresolved dispute between Attila's heirs over the distribution of these 'fiefs'.[27]

Dualism, representing the two wings (Left and Right or East and West) of the steppe imperial system,[28] which we have already noted as a key feature of Xiongnu political organization, was also a characteristic feature of the Hunnic Empire. The Hun king Ruga is known to have ruled together with his brother Oktar. According to the *Getica* (35.180), *germani Octar et Roas, qui ante Attilam regnum tenuisse narrantur*.[29] The brothers were followed in the Hunnic kingship by their nephews Bleda and Attila.[30] Attila, once he attained supreme power, also apportioned the East to his son Ellac in the familiar dual system. Priscus calls Attila the *praecipuus Hunnorum rex*, the high king of the Huns,[31] which points to the existence of other Hunnic sub-kings under his rule. In the 460s CE during the brief restoration of Hunnic rule along the Danube we again see two rulers, Dengizich and Ernakh (the sons of Attila in the West and East respectively). The so-called 'Bulgar' successors to the Hunnic Empire in the Pontic steppes also had two wings, the Kutrigurs in the West and the Utigurs in the East, ruled, according to their foundation legend recorded in Procopius, by the two sons of a dynastic founder, presumably Ernakh.[32]

Of particular interest also is the group of high-ranking officials in the Hun hierarchy whom Priscus calls the *logades*. This group included men such as Onegesius, the 'grand vizier', Edeco, the Hunnic ruler of the Sciri and Berik 'the ruler of many villages in Scythia' due to his noble birth.[33] These officials were clearly the equivalent of the Gudu marquesses and

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[26] See also Pritsak 1954a: 240.

[27] Priscus fr. 25 (Jordanes *Getica* 50, 259–63), Blockley 1983: 319–21. The word 'fief' is a loaded term which means different things for different historians. See Reynolds 1994: 12, 48–74. For the sake of convenience, the term 'fief' is used here as a synonym for appanage and grants of large territories by the king to his close vassals.

[28] Findley 2005: 33.

[29] See Croke 1977: 353, and Bona 1991: 50.

[30] Sinor 1990: 188; Croke 1981: 160, 164.

[31] Priscus fr. 24, Blockley 1983: 318.

[32] Procopius 8. 5.1-4. See Golden 1992: 103, for an excellent discussion on the Bulgar prince list, which features Attila and Ernakh as the founding ancestors of the Bulgars (including the Kutrigurs and Utigurs).

[33] Priscus, fr. 13, Blockley 1983: 284. Again indicative of the Hunnic practice of distributing 'fiefs' to royal family members and top ranking nobles as among the earlier Xiongnu. See also Thompson 1996: 181, and Demougeot 1979: 533, 541–2.

the twenty-four governors of the Left and Right (Lords of Ten Thousand Horsemen), which we have seen in the Xiongnu system. This is confirmed by the fact that these *logades* in different stages of their career functioned as ambassadors and communiqués[34] to vassal tribes (Onegesius for instance was sent to the Akatziri to supervise the appointment of Ellac as the over-lord of that tribe, Edeco to negotiate with the Eastern Roman government in Constantinople[35]). As among the Xiongnu the Huns also assigned key military commands to members of their royal family, e.g. Basich and Kursich, who commanded an expedition against Sassanian Persia in the 420s CE.[36] The name or rather the title of one of these Hunnic nobles is telling, Emmedzur, which is a Latinized corruption of Hunnic ämäcur, 'horse lord'. This of course must be a reference to the Xiongnu title for governor, 'lord of ten thousand horsemen'.[37]

Priscus also helpfully notes that there was a strict regulated hierarchy among the *logades*. This is revealed through the distinctly Inner Asian seating arrangements during the state banquets organized by Attila for his vassals and the visiting Roman ambassadors. Onegesius and Berik, both important *logades*, according to Priscus, were seated to the right and left of the Hunnic king respectively. However, Onegesius, who outranked Berik in the Hunnic hierarchy, sat to the right of the king, which was the position of honour. The right, denoting the East with orientation towards the north, always had precedence over the left (West) in steppe political systems[38] and this passage of Priscus confirms that the same organizational arrangement was in existence among the Huns in the fifth century CE. Members of the royal family who ranked even higher than the *logades*, e.g. Oebarsius, the paternal uncle of the king, and Ellac, the king's eldest son (presumably the equivalent to the Xiongnu Wise Kings of the Left and Right), were seated in conspicuous positions of honour right next to the king himself on the same couch.[39]

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[34] For discussion on similar functions (diplomatic missions and military assignments) performed by Xiongnu governors/sub-kings dispatched by the central government, see Pritsak 1954c: 194.

[35] Priscus fr. 11, Blockley 1983: 258.

[36] Blockley 1983: 386.

[37] Altheim 1959, Vol. 1: 27.

[38] The Muslim geographer Ibn Fadlan (922 CE) notes that the Khazars and the Volga Bulgars (descendents of the Huns) also held the right (East) as the place of honour. The most important princes were thus seated to the right of the ruler in ceremonial settings, as in the Hunnic context. See Velidî Togan 1939: 43, 212. See also Pritsak 1954b: 379.

[39] Priscus fr. 13, 14, Blockley 1983: 284, 290. These *logades* were clearly not random selections of men, but are probably identical with the ranked graded-officials of the Xiongnu. This is confirmed by the later East Roman/Byzantine usage of the same term to describe graded-officials within the Avar Empire that succeeded the Huns, see Pohl 1988: 186.

The Huns thus possessed a governmental apparatus of the Inner Asian variety, significantly different from the more rudimentary political organization found among the contemporary Germanic confederacies, possessing a tighter political command structure, precise ranks among government officials and allocation of clearly defined roles to subject peoples.[40] In this regulated Inner Asian empire taxes and tribute were also regularly collected by, presumably, the lower-ranking officials under the direction of the *logades* and the central government. Taxes usually seem to have been collected in the form of agricultural produce of various kinds from the empire's sedentary agrarian subject population.[41]

We have thus noted that the Huns had their equivalent of the Xiongnu dual kingship, Gudu marquesses, Lords of Ten Thousand Horsemen, system of taxation and elaborate hierarchy. It is also highly probable that they likewise possessed the above-mentioned Xiongnu political institutions of the four horn kings and six horn kings.[42] We have already noted earlier that in Volga Bulgaria, founded by a branch of the Bulgars (later Huns), there were four pre-eminent sub-kings, the equivalent of the old Xiongnu four horn kings representing the four main sub-divisions of the Empire, who sat to the right of the supreme ruler.[43] Although there is no direct evidence that the Huns possessed this institution, given the fact that they are shown to have retained many of the other aspects of the old Xiongnu political system, it is almost certain that they too possessed their own version of the four horn kings.

The evidence for the existence of the six horn kings among the Huns is more substantial. In the Xiongnu Empire these six horn kings consisted of members of the royal family (Xulianti) and other select aristocrats (usually those linked to the imperial family by marriage) from three other high-ranking noble families, the Huyan, Lan and Xubu (later also the Qiulin clan).[44] When rendered in Turkic this institution would have been called *Alti* (common Turkic, six) *cur* (nobles). In the Greek transliteration this was rendered Oultizouroi[45] in the Hunnic context. The institution would

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[40] Burns 1984: 46–7, 189.

[41] Chelchal, a Hun in Roman service during Dengizich's invasion of the Roman Empire in the late 460s CE vividly describes this Hunnic practice of tax/tribute collection to the Goths in the Hunnic army. The unpleasant memory of these tax collections drives the Goths to mutiny against their Hunnic officers, Priscus fr. 49, Blockley 1983: 356.

[42] See Ishjamts 1994: 158, for a description of the six horn nobles. See also de Crespigny 1984: 177.

[43] Pritsak 1954b: 379.

[44] Ishjamts 1994: 158; de Crespigny 1984: 77.

[45] Referred to as a tribe in Agathias 5.11.2, Frendo 1975: 146. It is, however, likely to be a reference not to a specific tribe, but to tribes led by the six lords. See Altheim 1959, Vol. 1: 27.

later evolve into the College of six boliades (boyars/nobles) in the Danubian Bulgarian Empire formed by Hunnic descendants.[46]

The transfer of Xiongnu political practices from Inner Asia to the Huns in Europe is remarkable enough. However, we discover that a very similar political system is also found among the Franks of Western Europe under the famous Merovingian dynasty (ca. 450–752 CE), whose kingdoms/empire absorbed the Gallic territories of the former Western Roman Empire and the western Germanic territories of the Hunnic Empire. The Hunnic system of 'fief' allocation to royal family members, division of the patrimonial inheritance (the kingdom/empire) among royal heirs, the gradation of rank among nobles and territorial/tribal lords, and the allocation of political office based on these ranks, is very similar to the system found among the Merovingian and Carolingian Franks, who also divided their realm into territorial kingdoms for royal heirs and into smaller counties which were distributed to a class of ranked military nobles.[47] This can hardly be a coincidence.

Among the Franks we observe the entrenchment of the Inner Asian concept of rulership, quite alien to Western Europe before the arrival of the Huns. Inner Asian political entities were distinguished by their strict observance of the dynastic principle buttressed by the concept of the sacred, legitimizing, hereditary charisma of the ruling dynasty. The concept is found among the earlier Xiongnu (whose ruling dynasty lasted well over 500 years) and also in the Rouran Khaganate (Avars (?) in Mongolia, whose ruling house lasted for ca. 200 years) which co-existed with the Huns (Wei Shu 103.2294=Bei Shi 98.3255). The Bulgars who succeeded the Huns in Europe also likewise in the old Inner Asian manner stressed the sacred, divine origins of their ruling dynasty.[48] The Merovingian Franks, whose kingdom was probably established with Hunnic military aid,[49] similarly

Another variant of this name is found in Jordanes in his reference to the Hunnic tribes north of the Black Sea, the Altziagiri (*Getica* 5.36–37). See also Moravcsik 1958, Vol. 2: 230, for discussion. The author of this chapter has argued in his 2013 and also his 2015 publications that the oulti/oult (a commonly found element in Hunnic names during the fifth and sixth centuries CE) of names such as Oultizouroi and Uld-in was an Oghuric Turkic variant of the common Turkic word for number six. This is an error and he now seeks to correct this mistake here. As the variant transliteration Altziagiri shows, Oultizouroi was in all likelihood just an imprecise transliteration by Greco-Roman writers of Alticur. See Haussig 2000: 277.

[46] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae,* 2.47. See also Haussig 2000: 277.

[47] See Bloch 1961: 394–5. For the division of the dynastic patrimony among Carolingian heirs, see Nelson 1995: 110–27.

[48] See Khazanov 2001: 4–5; Krader 1958: 79; Stepanov 2001: 17.

[49] See Kim 2013: 81–3, for a detailed discussion on the Hunnic involvement in the enthronement and rise to power of Childeric, the father of Clovis.

emphasized the legitmizing sacred charima of their 'long-haired kings'[50] who traced their lineage to the founding kings Childeric and Clovis.

The Franks, like the Inner Asian Huns and Turco-Mongols, showed an astonishing attachment to this dynastic principle,[51] in sharp contrast to the Romans and earlier Germanic tribal confederacies, among whom the dynastic principle was never fully established or even accepted. So-called dynasties in the Roman Empire for instance never lasted for more than three or four generations at the most. As a matter of fact, right up to the sixth century CE an imperial house ruling for even just three or four generations was highly exceptional by Roman standards. Most 'dynasties' lasted barely two generations. In contrast the Merovingian dynasty armed with the Inner Asian variety of legitimacy and dynastic principle (suitably buttressed by newly adopted Christian ideas of legitimacy also) maintained their rule for an astonishing 300 years.

Instead of the old Germanic confederacy in which virtually independent and largely equal petty kings and chiefs of different dynastic lineages regularly defied the authority of the judge or over-king (who exercised greater power than his peers only during emergencies and times of war), in Frankish Europe we find a much stronger, regulated kingship,[52] which is confined to a single dynasty, and an elaborate hierarchy of the steppe Inner Asian sort where the supreme ruler reigns in conjunction with his brothers (in some instances also male cousins) in a collective system with a clearly stratified ranking system for subordinate, inferior sub-kings and dukes. Thus in exactly the same way as among the Huns, the Frankish kings allocated major 'fiefs' to their brothers and cousins who together partitioned the royal realm/patrimony,[53] but at the same time managed to maintain the principle of the unity of the dynastic state.[54]

After the death of Childeric, the dynastic founder, we begin to see this principle being applied in practice. Clovis, Childeric's young heir, did not immediately start ruling all of his father's patrimony, but found himself sharing the rule of the Franks with three other kings, a total of four: Sigibert (a relative, King of the Ripuarian Franks), Chararic and Ragnachar (a cousin of Clovis who ruled at Cambrai). Just like Attila before him Clovis had to eliminate his relatives and allies to seize supreme power according to the

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[50] Van Dam 1999: 205–6.
[51] Fouracre 1999: 387, 395: non-Merovingian usurpations of the throne were simply unacceptable to the Frankish aristocracy for almost 300 years.
[52] Oosten 1996: 222–3. Hummer 1998: 12, accurately points out that this new form of kingship among the Franks was triggered by influences from the Eurasian steppes.
[53] Ganshof 1971: 88–9; Kaiser 1993: 68–71.
[54] Geary 1988: 117.

principle of Inner Asian tanistry.[55] After this bloodletting, the notion of an undivided Merovingian dynastic state would remain intact despite repeated partitions that followed the death of every prominent king. This is of course clearly reminiscent of the same phenomenon found in Inner Asian states such as the Xiongnu and the Hunnic Empire described earlier.

The division of the realm into two main wings and also four constituent parts, an old Inner Asian political practice (recall the dualism and four main sub-divisions of the Xiongnu Empire discussed earlier), is repeated time and again in Merovingian history. The Merovingian kingdom in exactly the same way as the steppe empires of Inner Asia had two main wings/divisions, initially the Salian and Ripurian, then later with territorial adjustments Neustria and Austrasia (a dual system). Later Burgundy was added to the mix as the third *regnum*. However, Burgundy was soon combined with Neustria to re-establish the dual structure (Aquitaine was also at times governed separately as a fourth kingdom, but in a subordinate position).[56] What is revealing is the fact that wherever Inner Asians are found in any substantial numbers, this mode of governing/partitioning the realm was practised with regularity. For instance in the Alan (Inner Asian) dominated tribal confederacy that conquered Roman Spain in the first quarter of the fifth century CE, the realm was in the familiar Inner Asian manner divided into four territorial sub-divisions. The dominant Alans were allotted the largest and most important share, nearly half of Spain consisting of the old Roman provinces of Lusitania and Carthaginensis. The Siling Vandals were given the province of Baetica. The Suebi and the Hasding Vandals were each given half of Gallaecia, creating four subdivisions.[57]

That none of the above was an accident or simply a coincidence is shown by what happens at the death of the ruthless Clovis in 511 CE. The Frankish kingdom is again divided among his four sons.[58] This was not simply because Clovis happened to have four surviving sons. Rather what we are seeing is a structural imitation of Inner Asian state organization. This is shown clearly by yet another partition which occurs after the death of Clovis' last surviving son Chlotar I in 561 CE.[59] Again the Frankish realm was divided into four parts.[60] Despite these partitions, however, the dynastic state was still regarded by the Franks, as among the Huns and other Inner Asians, as a

[55] See James 1988: 88–91, and Périn and Feffer 1987, Vol. 1: 159–60, for Clovis' brutal elimination of his rivals and kin. See also Van Dam 1999: 197–8.

[56] Geary 1988: 157; Goetz 2003: 326; Van Dam 1999: 203.

[57] See Arce 2003:138–40.

[58] Bachrach 1972: 18; Kaiser 1993: 28; Wood 1994: 50; Van Dam 1999: 99.

[59] James 1988: 171.

[60] Wood 1994: 56.

single entity.[61] This enabled the periodic 'reunification' or rather centralization of power within the dynastic state under the authority of a particularly assertive and strong ruler such as Chlotar II in 613 CE.[62] The Franks also utilized the Hunnic/ Inner Asian practice of appointing sub-kings and regularly distributed 'fiefs' to members of the royal family and high ranking nobles. By way of example King Dagobert I, who like Chlotar II united the Frankish realm under his authority, before he became the supreme Frankish king was himself a sub-king. In 629 CE Dagobert would appoint or rather concede the appointment of his half-brother Charibert II (629–32 CE) as sub-king of a part of Aquitaine.[63]

This Inner Asian system of governance was continued by the Carolingians who in the eighth century CE displaced the 300-year-old Merovingian dynasty as the new ruling house of the Franks. The great Charlemagne in 781 CE, following what was by then established Frankish tradition, appointed his two younger sons Louis and Pepin sub-kings of Aquitaine and Italy.[64] In exactly the same fashion as in the earlier Xiongnu and Hunnic empires, less important 'fiefs' and buffer zones between the core Frankish territories and the lands controlled by foreign powers were allocated to Frankish dukes who ranked below the royal sub-kings. These dukes controlled more distant territories such as Bavaria, Thuringia, Rhaetia, Provence and sometimes also Aquitaine.[65] Thus, the Frankish political system was likely to have been a conscious imitation of the preceding Inner Asian state model, described above, which was imported into Europe by the Huns and other Inner Asians such as the Alans.

Some might disagree with this analysis and argue that the Franks were not imitating Inner Asian practices, but rather they had simply inherited from the Romans the model of the tetrarchy attempted during the reign of Diocletian (284–305 CE) or the Franks were drawing on the subsequent Roman model of the four praetorian prefectures.[66] Such arguments are, however, clearly unsustainable, since the specific, characteristic features of the Frankish system, as demonstrated above, clearly align it with the political systems found in Inner Asia rather than with the proposed Roman models. The tetrarchy in the Roman Empire was a one-off experiment that ultimately failed after just two decades, and was then hastily abandoned.

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[61] Geary 1988: 117.

[62] See Widdowson 2009: 3, Schutz 2000: 183–4, and Lasko 1965: 213.

[63] Wickham 2009: 116–19.

[64] Grierson 1965: 290; Ganshof 1971: 278; McKitterick 1983: 53.

[65] Geary 1988: 118–19; James 1988: 105–6; Wood 1994: 159–64; McKitterick 1983: 17–18, 23.

[66] For instance, see Geary 1988: 95.

The system of prefectures is also clearly different in nature from the Merovingian dynastic partitions. Both the Roman tetrarchy and the system of prefectures were innovations attempted by the Roman state primarily to resolve critical administrative problems faced by the empire during Late Antiquity. The Merovingian territorial divisions in contrast were not caused primarily by administrative concerns, but rather by the necessity of providing 'fiefs'/territories to royal heirs according to the very Inner Asian laws of dynastic succession. In Inner Asia any legitimate male heir of the ruling dynasty was entitled to his share of the patrimony (the dynastic state). This necessitated the constant division of territory to satisfy potential heirs and also precipitated struggles over the extent and value of individual shares of the dynastic inheritance, which is exactly what we find happening among the Franks under the Merovingians. The Franks were thus following Inner Asian dynastic precedents, not Roman administrative innovations.

This is made even clearer when we observe how territory was distributed to royal heirs. In the event of a partition Frankish kings and sub-kings usually assigned major former Roman administrative centres as the primary residences of royal power.[67] However, larger Roman administrative divisions and Roman provincial boundaries were completely ignored when it came to demarcating and determining the boundary, extent and size of the various territories and sub-kingdoms distributed to contending heirs.[68] This implies that Roman administrative norms and precedents were not the key factor in determining the nature and extent of territorial divisions. What mattered was the comparative value of urban centres and population groups allotted to the specific groups of heirs, which, as in Inner Asian polities, would determine who among the kings had seniority and whether the distribution was 'fair' or 'unfair' to those involved in the dynastic partition. What is more, the Frankish practice of distributing smaller and less important territorial 'fiefs' to relatives of the royal family and also graded members of the high nobility,[69] despite the use of familiar Roman titles such as *dux* and *comes* by sources writing in Latin, is definitely Inner Asian inspired, and has simply no equivalent in the Roman tradition.

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[67] Geary 2002: 136; Van Dam 1999: 209.

[68] Kaiser 1993: 28.

[69] Van Dam 1999: 209. See also Fouracre 1999: 374–5, 385, and Van Dam 1999: 212, 218, for discussion on the relationship between the Frankish central government (i.e. the kings) and the aristocracy, how aristocratic fief-holders were tied to the dynasty by an inherent conservatism and dedication to the dynastic principle, and how the person of the king was associated with military leadership, distribution of prestige goods and privileges, legitimacy of land entitlements, and guarantee of noble status. This system is highly reminiscent of the relationship between the kings and their military aristocracy in Inner Asian empires.

Also noteworthy is the fact that the oath of loyalty of the vassals to the king that characterized the Merovingian political order and, equally, later 'feudal' Europe which arose out of the 'proto-feudal' Frankish system of governance, had precedents in the Hunnic Empire where sub-kings and major vassals were required to swear an oath of loyalty and allegiance to the supreme Hun King.[70] Other similarities between the Frankish state and Inner Asian polities abound. The annual Frankish assemblies,[71] where the rank and file of the Frankish army and the military nobility of the kingdom in the presence of the king/kings discussed critical issues relating to foreign policy and also attended to legal disputes, closely resemble the Inner Asian Turco-Mongol assemblies like the Kuriltai where key foreign policy issues, the all important matters of dynastic succession and legal issues were debated and decided. The Frankish practice of tribute-collection from subjugated peoples and vassal states, e.g. from the Lombard kingdom in Italy, the Saxon tribes in Germany and the Gallo-Roman inhabitants of the core Frankish lands,[72] in lieu of more direct taxation of the Roman sort, may also be partially the result of the influence of the Inner Asian model of tributary empires.[73] Furthermore, the Frankish institution of the *missi regii* closely resembles the functions of the Hunnic *logades* mentioned earlier in the chapter.[74]

Naturally, the impact of pre-existing Roman administrative structures on the Merovingian Frankish state must also be considered in order to arrive at a holistic assessment of the nature of the Frankish political system.[75] However, what can no longer be denied or disputed is the fact that the Merovingian kingdoms were built on a highly complex and hybrid political model that combined pre-existing Roman administrative institutions, Christian religious ideology, Germanic traditions and steppe-derived Inner Asian dynastic political practices and stratified hierarchy. Only when we consider all these factors together can we arrive at a full appreciation of the nature of Frankish political organization in Early Medieval Western Europe.

In conclusion, the various empires of Eurasia in Late Antiquity were intimately connected with each other. Only by adopting a thoroughly comparative

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[70] Jordanes *Getica* 48.248. Gesimund and the Goths under his rule support Balamber, king of the Huns, against another Gothic ruler by the name of Vinitharius because Gesimund was mindful of his oath of fidelity to the Huns.

[71] Wickham 2009: 122–3.

[72] Geary 1988: 100; Fouracre 1999: 378.

[73] Ganshof 1971: 96; Reuter 1985: 75–6.

[74] Altheim 1959, Vol. 4: 25. For the *missi regii*, see also Grierson 1965: 291, and Ganshof 1971: 56–8, 126–35, 166–7, 173, for more information.

[75] Lewis 2000: 73–4, and see Wood 1996: 361–2.

perspective can we begin to comprehend to what degree these early states were affected by the extensive exchange and transmission of political practices and traditions across Eurasia. In this imperial exchange and transmission of political ideas and cultural practices the Huns of Inner Asia played a pivotal role. Their arrival marked the initiation of intense political transformations in Western Europe, most notably among the Merovingian Franks. A comparative analysis of Inner Asian, Greco-Roman and Frankish history can therefore yield surprising new revelations about Eurasian interconnectivity and the critical role played by Inner Asian steppe empires in facilitating the spread of political and cultural ideas across Eurasia. A comparative political and institutional history of all Eurasian empires in the fourth and fifth centuries CE will no doubt yield even greater surprises and demonstrate that Eurasia was in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages an interconnected totality. A more comprehensive, comparative, holistic, and interdisciplinary approach is therefore necessary to accurately understand these Eurasia-wide political and cultural transformations facilitated by Inner Asian steppe empires.

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2 | Tang China's Horse Power: the Borderland Breeding Ranch System

JONATHAN KARAM SKAFF

'Horses are weapons of the state. If Heaven takes away these weapons, the state will be in danger of perishing.'

– New Tang History

Introductory Remarks

The horse breeding system of the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE) provides an excellent case study of premodern interactions between steppe and sedentary peoples in eastern Eurasia. For sedentary empires of China, grassland regions of North China and Inner Asia were the main sources of 'horse power' from the first millennium BCE until the invention of the internal combustion engine in the twentieth century. Equines, providing rapid transportation and communication, were sinews of overland empires. When incorporated into armies, cavalry mounts could play a decisive role in battle, and transport horses moved supply trains. Consequently, a sedentary empire's capacity to obtain quality horses was a barometer of its health.

Climatic and environmental differences between the Chinese heartland and the Inner Asian steppe have led previous scholarship on China's horse procurement to emphasize the necessity of imports from Inner Asian states.[1] The semi-arid Eurasian steppe was the natural range of the wild horse, and was the ideal region to breed and raise horses from the time of their first domestication in the fourth millennium BCE.[2] Although domesticated horses can be raised successfully in sedentary regions with temperate climates, such as the Chinese heartland, it is less economical than the steppe, which could support larger herds of horses on extensive grasslands. Sedentary societies had less land for pasture or fodder crops because of the need to grow grain to feed dense populations of humans.[3] As a result of these geographical differences, earlier scholarship emphasized the dependency of China on Inner Asian states for its horse supplies. Paul

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[1] Creel 1970: 183–4; Sinor 1972: 174.
[2] Kelekna 2009: 16–20, 29–49.
[3] Smith 1978: 60–1.

Smith has refined this geographical thesis by pointing out that a dynasty's need to import horses was variable. The key factor was the regime's capacity to access some of the major pasture regions on China's periphery. The best warhorses came from the China–Inner Asia borderlands to the north and north-west of the Chinese heartland.[4] Dynasties that expanded into borderland regions obtained pasture and skilled breeders and trainers needed to produce horses domestically and reduce imports from rivals in Inner Asia.

The importance of knowing how to breed and train horses should not be underestimated. According to an experienced horseman, breeding requires specialized knowledge. Wild horses are too small to be used for hunting or warfare, but selective mating can produce larger domesticated breeds. Moreover, equines 'present a dangerous situation when trainers first attempt to mount yearlings or two year olds'. Preparation for warfare adds further difficulties because the horse is an 'animal of "flight" rather than "fight," ' yet for warfare it must be trained to 'face loud noises, leap fences, charge into crowds, and gallop at man's command, often to its own destruction'.[5] The Northern Song Dynasty (960–1126) illustrates the effect of unqualified horse grooms on a breeding programme. Song ranches produced only 200 foals per 1,000 mares rather than the quota of 500 per 1,000. The annual average total in the early 1070s was 1,600 foals of which only about 250 were suited to warfare.[6] In 1061, the superintendent of government ranches blamed the poor quality of foals on inexperienced handlers. 'Sometimes the sire is large and the dam small, sometimes the sire is small and the dam large. At the time of breeding there is no selection or discrimination; thus there is no means of obtaining large and excellent horses.'[7] These problems with horse system personnel occurred because the Song lacked access to the China–Inner Asian borderlands and people, which were occupied by the Xixia (1038–1227) and Liao (916–1125) dynasties.

Although the Tang controlled these borderland territories in the first half of the dynasty, historians studying Tang horse procurement originally emphasized state-level trade of Chinese silk for horses of the Mongolia-based Türk and Uighur empires.[8] A revised perspective came from the scholars, Ma Junmin and Wang Shiping, who noted that the Tang's horse breeding ranches, located in the China–Inner Asia borderlands, were the most significant source of horses in the first half of the dynasty. They see

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[4] Smith 1991: 17–31.
[5] Downs 1961: 1193–5, n. 1192; Creel 1970: 161.
[6] Smith 1991: 21, n. 26.
[7] Quoted in Creel 1970: 184.
[8] Beckwith 1991; Ecsedy 1968; Jagchid 1989.

the watershed as the An Lushan rebellion (755–763), which caused the Tang's permanent retreat from much of the borderland territory and started the dynasty's dependency on horse imports from the Uighur Empire in Mongolia.[9] More recently, my scholarship on the horse trade in the first half of the dynasty argues that the Tang army's small-scale purchases from allied Turkic borderland tribes at market rates was another element of supply that has been overlooked.[10]

This chapter builds on my previous research to investigate how the Tang horse administration utilized borderland steppe land and people to increase supplies of equines. Until the mid-eighth century, the Tang effectively exploited the regions of North China and Inner Mongolia possessing grasslands needed to feed horses, and employed borderland inhabitants skilled at breeding and caring for them. Consequently, the China–Inner Asia borderlands provided the 'horse power' needed to propel the Tang's aggressive expansionary efforts into Inner Asia, and knit together an expansive empire. This finding supports Paul Smith's geographical thesis that the main factor influencing herd size was control of pasture regions. Nonetheless, the Smith thesis does not explain the large fluctuations in numbers of horses on state ranches from the mid-seventh to mid-eighth century that will be described below. Ma and Wang, noting these changes, attribute the high points to strong imperial rule, and effective legal and administrative systems with horse experts in leadership positions. Low points are ascribed to Türk raids and corruption in horse administration.[11] Although Ma and Wang make valid points, this chapter argues that they have overemphasized raiding and overlooked other factors: weather disasters, Tang gains from war booty and diplomatic gifts, and the multiethnic array of borderland natives staffing high *and* low levels of the ranch system.

The Borderland Ranch System

Like other Eurasian states, the Tang needed mounts to supply the army, palace, postal relay and transportation systems, and other government agencies. The total in use at any one time is unknown, but a rough estimate for the early eighth century is several hundred thousand. The number of replacement horses needed annually also is uncertain, but probably was in the tens of thousands. Military expeditions in Inner Asia would have

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[9] Ma and Wang 1995: 92–8.
[10] Skaff 2012: 258–70.
[11] Ma and Wang 1995: 92–6.

caused short-term spikes in demand of 60,000 to 90,000 horses. To meet these needs, the Tang government's ranch system was established early in the dynasty, most likely adopted directly from the preceding Sui Dynasty (581–618 CE), which in turn evolved from earlier Northern Dynasties and Han models.[12] In addition to horses, the ranches bred cattle, camels, donkeys, mules and sheep to provide food or transportation.

A government agency, the Court of Imperial Stud (*taipu si* 太僕寺), headquartered at the capital, oversaw the Tang horse breeding ranches in the provinces. At its fullest development, the agency was headed by a chief minister (*taipu qing* 太僕卿), assisted by two vice ministers (*taipu shaoqing* 太僕少卿) who supervised a staff of eight officials, almost fifty managers, clerks and scribes, 600 veterinarians (*shouyi* 獸醫), and four erudites of veterinary medicine (*shouyi boshi* 獸醫博士) who taught 100 students. In keeping with Chinese bureaucratic traditions, this agency annually compiled comprehensive registers of breeding ranch livestock populations.[13] The agency also managed the imperial carriages, stables and estates. The latter provided meat and milk to the palace.[14] As discussed below, some chief ministers and vice ministers are known to have been experts in horse care.

The total number of livestock ranches varied over time, presumably as the size of the herds fluctuated. For example, there were forty-eight in the mid-seventh century and perhaps as many as sixty-five in the early eighth century.[15] The ranches were situated in north and north-western prefectures of the empire with grasslands (Map 2.1). Geographical information on Tang prefectures with ranches is listed in Table 2.3. As I have argued previously, this territory was more ecologically diverse than at present. Due to a much lower farming population and wetter climate, stockbreeding was a more substantial component of the medieval economy of North China than in modern times. The ranches were located in prefectures that I classify as 'China–Inner Asia borderlands' with irrigated agriculture and pastoral nomadism on surrounding grasslands, or 'China-Inner Asia borderland periphery' with rain-fed agriculture and pastoralism, horseback riding and hunting.[16]

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[12] Skaff 2012: 259, nn. 33–5.

[13] XTS 48: 1253–5, 50:1337–8; TLD 17: 23b–30a; TLSY 15: 275–7; des Rotours 1974: 390–403, 884–92; Maspero 1953: 88; Johnson 1997: 178–81. These sources describe the fully developed administrative system probably existing from about the mid-seventh to mid-eighth centuries. Variant names of the Court of the Imperial Stud were *siyu si* 司馭寺 from 662 to 671 and *sipu si* 司僕寺 from 684 to 705.

[14] The Bureau of Equipment (*jiabu* 駕部) seems to have shared some of these functions, see Ma and Wang 1995: 9–11.

[15] XTS 48: 1255; TLD 5: 30a; Ma and Wang 1995: 42–3; des Rotours 1974: 400–1.

[16] Skaff 2012: 24–31.
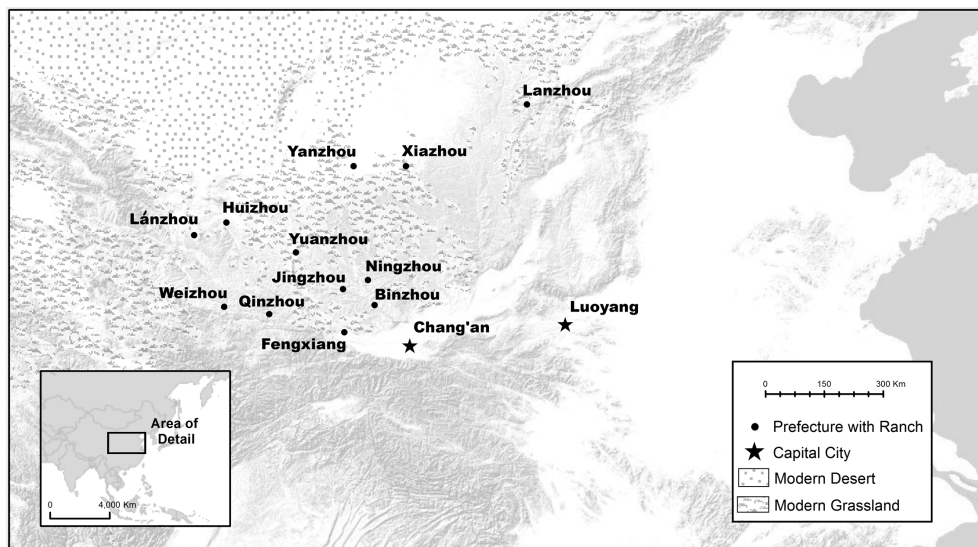
Map 2.1 Tang breeding ranches

A director of herds (*mujian* 牧監) headed each ranch, which ranged in size from under 3,000 to over 5,000 horses. Each ranch was subdivided into herds (*qun* 群) of 120 horses with a chief herdsman (*muzhang* 牧長) and several grooms, who were overseen by various other managers.[17] Another layer of administration added accountability to the system from the mid-seventh century when the court established regional ranch supervisors (*jianmu shi* 監牧使) with small staffs overseeing anywhere from two to fifteen ranches. Like the number of ranches, the number of supervisors varied over time from perhaps as few as four to as many as eight. See Table 2.1 below for the six regional supervisors circa 738. Every autumn, the regional supervisors compiled registers of horses on the ranches under their authority and submitted them to the Court of Imperial Stud. At the end of the year, the supervisors made inspection tours to carry out performance evaluations of ranch personnel in their regions. The supervisors enforced administrative regulations with rewards of silk on a prescribed scale for surpassing breeding quotas, and punishments that increased in severity as breeding fell short of quotas or animal mortality exceeded allowed rates.[18]

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[17] XTS 48: 1253–5, 50: 1337–8; TLD 17: 23b–30a; des Rotours 1974: 390–403. Stipulated herd sizes varied according to the type of animal with 120 for cattle, 620 for sheep and seventy for camels, donkeys and mules.

[18] On supervisors, see TLD 5: 30a, 17: 25b; XTS 50: 1337–8; THY 66: 1145; des Rotours 1974: 890. The sources exhibit confusion about the number and purpose of supervisors, which

Tang administrative regulations and laws generally conform to the practical realities of horsemanship and imply that stockbreeding was the major purpose of the ranches. Starting in 719, stallions were dispatched to the frontier armies after breeding season to economize on feed, leaving only broodmares and juveniles in the herds.[19] The regulations stipulate that stallions should breed with the mares in the third lunar month (mid-April to mid-May), and set an annual quota of sixty foals for every 100 mares. This was higher than the above-mentioned 50 per cent breeding rate during the Northern Song, but feasible because mares on modern stud farms can have an annual foaling rate from 60 to over 70 per cent if breeding occurs during the February to May period.[20] For every foal above the quota, the chief herdsman and grooms split one bolt of silk. When missing the quota, the punishment for the first missing foal was thirty strokes with the light stick, and penalties escalated to a maximum of three years of penal servitude.[21] If the Tang regulations were enforced, they created powerful incentives for a successful breeding programme.

As the foals grew older, a branding system aided recordkeeping and accompanied the process of evaluating, training and allocating horses for government service. Foals received three brands: a small 'official' (*guan* 官) character on the right shoulder, the year on the right haunch, and name of the ranch across the buttocks. When they were yearlings, ranch personnel placed a 'flying' brand on their right shoulder and judged them to determine their quality. Fine and ordinary horses received a 'dragon' brand.[22] Juveniles were placed in herds for training when they reach two years old.[23] Ranch administrators assigned men to train these horses during the third and fourth lunar months of the year.[24] Presumably, this involved saddling and mounting the young horses. The regional ranch supervisors annually selected the fifty finest juveniles and the 100 strongest geldings from the ranches under their jurisdictions for the emperor's stables and corrals. These horses received 'three flowers' brands across the buttocks. Remaining horses were allocated as needed when they were two to three years old. Those dispatched to the military and postal relay systems were branded

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may reflect changes over time in administrative arrangements and/or the size of the herds. See Ma and Wang 1995: 15–29; Wang 1982: 45. For rewards and punishments, see note 21 below.

[19] CFYG 621: 24b–25a; TDZLB 2: 1354.

[20] Foaling rates decline when breeding takes place in summer or autumn, and as broodmares grow older than ten years of age, see McDowell 2003.

[21] TLD 17: 26a–27b; TLSY 15: 275–7; Johnson 1997: 178–81; Maspero 1953: 90.

[22] For citations, see note 25 below.

[23] TLD 17: 25b.

[24] TLD 17: 26a–27b; TLSY 15: 275–27; Johnson 1997: 178–81.

with 'exit' characters. Those judged to be robust were normally sent to the military.[25] The postal system typically received ordinary horses.[26] Inferior mounts were sent to capital civil bureaucrats and honourary guardsmen who presumably only needed horses for intra-city transportation.[27] Provincial administrators only received horses from the ranches when supplies were sufficient.[28]

Horse feed was a mixture of pasture and fodder suited to the agropastoralism of the borderland periphery regions. According to a Tang military manual, horses were to be grazed during the spring and summer and fed fodder during the autumn and winter. The autumn and winter daily fodder rations were set at 1 *dou* (6 litres) of millet, 3 *he* 合 (0.18 litres) of salt, and two bales of hay.[29] Local conditions apparently influenced feeding patterns, as demonstrated by Sun Xiaolin's study of the postal station horses at Turfan, a desert oasis with relatively little pasture. Horses received a mixture of grain and hay, but only the fine horses consistently received the full ration. Otherwise, the grain ration varied according to fitness, strenuousness of activity, and season. Horses received half-rations in the spring and summer, probably due to the paucity of local pasture; increasing amounts in the autumn; and about three-quarters to full rations in winter.[30] We can expect that feeding patterns on ranches also varied according to season and local conditions.

To meet the demands for fodder on the ranches, the government apparently relied on various sources of supply. One was a miscellaneous tax in hay levied on farmers living within 500 *li* (250 kilometres) of the dual capitals of Chang'an and Luoyang.[31] Another was state farms (*tuntian* 屯田)

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[25] THY 72: 1305; TLD 11: 26a–26b, 17: 28a–28b; XTS 47: 1217, 1220, 50: 1338; Maspero 1953: 88–9; des Rotours 1974: 219, 235–6, 892. If robust horses were unavailable, the military received ordinary horses. For horses sent to the palace stables, the sources are confused about the identities and purposes of brands that are described as a 'flying' on the left haunch, and a *feng* on the left shoulder meaning 'wind' (風 [THY, TLD]) or 'phoenix' (鳳 [XTS]).

[26] This is based on my analysis of excavated postal station documents circa 722, a time when ranch supplies were relatively low (see discussion below). Scribes carefully recorded each horse's characteristics including quality and brand indicating origin. In the surviving sample of ninety-three mounts of known quality, about three quarters were ordinary horses. Of the subset of thirty-six horses with 'official' brands indicating origins on Tang ranches, nineteen or slightly more than half were of ordinary quality with the remainder below average or inferior. See Ast.III.3.7, 9, 10, 37 in Chen 1995: 192–209; Skaff 2012: 265.

[27] TLD 17: 29a.

[28] See note 52 below.

[29] TBYJ 5: 559–60.

[30] Sun's findings are as follows: 0.5 *dou* in the second to sixth lunar months, 0.5–0.8 *dou* in the seventh to ninth months, 0.5–1.0 *dou* in tenth and eleventh months, and 0.7–1.0 *dou* in intercalary eleventh to twelfth months. See Sun 1990: 193–5.

[31] CFYG 621: 24b–25a; TDZLB 2: 1354; TLD 7: 25b. The latter source mentions the 500 *li* distance.

Table 2.1 Ranches and state farms under jurisdiction of ranch supervisors, ca. 738[32]

Regional Ranch Supervisor	Tang Circuit (Modern Province)	Ranches	State farms	Farms/ Ranch
Southern Supervisor (*nanshi* 南使)	Longyou (Gansu)	15	6	0.400
Western Supervisor (*xishi* 西使)	Longyou (Gansu or Ningxia)	16	10	0.625
Northern Supervisor (*beishi* 北使)	Guannei (Shaanxi)	7	2	0.286
Yanzhou Supervisor (Yanzhou *shi* 鹽州使)	Guannei (Shaanxi)	8	4	0.500
Lanzhou Supervisor (Lanzhou *shi* 嵐州使)	Hedong (Shanxi)	3	1?	?
Eastern or Changyang Supervisor (*dongshi* 東使 or Changyang *shi* 長陽使)	Hebei (Hebei)	9	6?	?
	Totals	58	22–29	0.478

under the jurisdiction of ranch supervisors (see Table 2.1).[33] Although state farms normally supplied frontier garrisons, the ones serving the ranches may be connected to various projects in the 720s to mobilize vagrant families to build drainage and/or irrigation systems to increase land under cultivation.[34] The farm to ranch ratio in Table 2.1 varied from 0.286 under the Northern Supervisor to 0.625 under the Western Supervisor. Reasons for these variations are unknown, but could be due to differences in state farm acreage and ranch herd size, and extent and quality of local pasture.[35]

Fodder supplies seem to have improved in the early eighth century. A Tang imperial inscription of 725, 'Stele Eulogizing the Longyou Ranches' mentions that fodder previously had been shipped to the ranches.[36] The government may have obtained this feed via the above-mentioned hay tax,

[32] The regional ranch supervisors are according to TLD 5: 30a. The state farms of each supervisor are according to TLD 7 (addendum):171, but two cases are ambiguous. For Lanzhou, the supervisor (*shi*) character is missing. Since Lanzhou had an army garrison and ranches (see Table 2.3), its single state farm could have belonged to the military or the ranch system or perhaps both. TLD 7 mentions an otherwise unknown Changyang Supervisor, but this could be a confused reference to the Eastern Supervisor attested in Hebei Circuit (see note 18 above).

[33] TLD 7: 21a–21b; Twitchett 1959: 164.

[34] Herbert 1975.

[35] The standard state farm was 50 qing (650 acres), but smaller farms also existed, see Twitchett 1959: 165; Skaff 1998: 252–3.

[36] Longyou *jianmu songde bei* 《隴右監牧頌德碑》in ZYGJ 11: 25b–31a; WYYH 869: 1b.

the regular grain tax, or purchases on the private market.[37] The inscription credits Wang Maozhong 王毛仲 (d. 731), the Chief Minister of the Imperial Stud from 719 to 731, with implementing reforms to improve 'winter fodder'. By 725 five regional ranch supervisors oversaw 31,000 farming households (*changhu* 長戶) who had opened 1,900 *qing* (24,700 acres) of land to cultivate chrysanthemum barley (*tongmai* 蒿麥) and alfalfa (*musu* 苜蓿) on what were probably state farms.[38] Chrysanthemum barley is an unknown variety, but alfalfa is a legume hay, rich in calcium and protein, recommended for horses with high nutritional needs, such as juveniles and brood mares.[39] As a winter feed, alfalfa would have been excellent supplement for mares foaling in the spring.

In sum, the design of the Tang ranch system was typical of the Chinese legal-bureaucratic tradition, but was not a static entity. For example, evidence of fodder supplies demonstrates a willingness to innovate by cultivating new crops, like alfalfa.

Herd Management and Herd Sizes

A means of assessing the effectiveness of the Tang horse breeding system is to examine herd sizes, which fluctuated greatly over time. Table 2.2 compiles scattered surviving data on horse populations and total livestock of Sui and Tang ranches. Horses clearly were the most important ranch animal, always comprising over half of total livestock in years when comparative data is available. Growing from a modest start, Tang domestic supplies fluctuated from a known high of 706,000 in the mid-seventh century to a low of 240,000 in the early eighth century. After reaching the known eighth century peak by 731, herd numbers plummeted three decades later when most of the borderland ranches were lost during the An Lushan rebellion. The discussion below will investigate how policy changes influenced fluctuations in herd size in the pre-rebellion period.

The civil war at the end of the Sui provided an opportunity for the nascent Tang Dynasty to start a breeding herd. From Sui horse herds that had reached over 100,000 heads in the 590s, Tang forces captured 3,000 mounts in 618 and combined them with 2,000 horses purchased from Türks to establish a modest ranch system. Thereafter, the Tang's horse

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[37] On tax grain, market purchases and army supply, see Twitchett 1970: 25–33, 70; Skaff 1998: 242–62.

[38] ZYGJ 11: 29b–30a; WYYH 869: 4a. On efforts to expand state farms, see 33 note above.

[39] Lawrence, Coleman and Henning 2000.

Table 2.2 Sui-Tang breeding herd sizes[40]

Year	Total livestock	Horses	Horses as Proportion of Total Livestock	Mares		Juveniles	
				Number	% of total horses	Number	% of total horses
ca. 590		100,000+					
618		5,000					
ca. 650		706,000					
713	387,000	240,000	62.01%				
725	766,000	430,000	56.14%				
731		440,000					
753		319,387		133,598	41.83%		
754	605,603	325,792	53.80%			200,080	61.41%
762		30,000					
804	9,500	5,700	60.00%				
819		3,200 or 3,300					
837		7,000					

population underwent tremendous growth to the point where the dynasty had over 700,000 heads by the mid-seventh century. The above-mentioned 'Stele Eulogizing the Longyou Ranches' attributed the expansion to the able management of Zhang Wansui 張萬歲 (fl. 617–664), who served as the vice minister of the Court of Imperial Stud from 641 to 664. It credits Zhang with instituting the above-mentioned system of regional ranch supervisors overseeing clusters of ranches.[41] The *New Tang History* claims that supplies of horses were so bountiful that at some point the court banned private horse rearing in the interior, presumably to encourage production of grain.[42]

Signs that state herds might be diminishing in size came when Emperor Gaozong (r. 649–683) issued an edict in 677 that rescinded the ban on private horse breeding. The emperor ordered provincial officials to use

[40] Skaff 2012: 260–1.
[41] ZYGJ 11: 26b; WYYH 869: 1b; XTS 50: 1337; des Rotours 1974: 887. For the dates of Zhang's service, see THY 66: 1353–4; des Rotours 1974: 897, n. 893.
[42] Since private herds supposedly had hundreds of times more animals than the government ones, it seems questionable that this ban was ever enforced (XTS 50:1338; des Rotours 1974: 896).

government funds to purchase mounts to meet the extraordinary demands of a military campaign against Tibet.[43] This was perhaps an early indication of a dramatic decline in ranch herds that lasted several decades. By 719, when the next surviving empire-wide count of state ranch horses is available, herd size reportedly had begun to recover, but there were only 240,000 heads, representing a decrease of almost two-thirds from seventh century highs. Imperial edicts of the early eighth century allude to chronic shortages of horses for ordinary government business as the court experimented with new policies to remedy the shortfall. For example, one edict mentions that some provincial officials had been providing their own mounts prior to 723.[44] Another sign of shortages was a government requisition of horses from private households for temporary use at postal stations and military garrisons. Since this levy created a disincentive to own equines, the court worried about a decline in horsemanship and military preparedness among the common people. To alleviate this problem, Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–756) ordered local officials in 721 to limit the levy to households with ten or more horses. Local officials also were empowered to impose a temporary tax in cash to buy horses on the market.[45] Overall, these edicts reveal the court experimenting with taxes and market exchanges to meet its demand for horses.

The reasons for the decline in herd size is addressed in Xuanzong's 'Stele Eulogizing the Longyou Ranches', which attributed the problem to three factors: foreign raids, poor management and embezzlement by horse system employees.[46] Although the claims of the stele should be treated with caution because it was composed under Xuanzong – whose reign is glorified in an implied contrast to his grandmother Empress Wu (r. 690–705) and uncle Zhongzong (r. 684, 705–710) – there is clear evidence of the Türk raids, which will be discussed below.[47] The allegations of corruption and incompetence have only indirect support. Most suggestively, Empress Wu appointed two horse officials who had reputations for corruption and incompetence. However, nothing is known of their activities as horse administrators. One, Lai Junchen 來俊臣 – a notorious ringleader of the purges of her political enemies – was appointed vice director of the Court of Imperial Stud in 697 after three years of exile, but was executed soon

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[43] ZZTJ 202: 6388; Beckwith 1987: 43–5.

[44] CFYG 621: 25b; TDZLB 2: 1354.

[45] CFYG 621: 25a; TDZLB 2: 1354; XTS 50: 1338. I follow the interpretation of des Rotours, who notes a mistake in some versions of the edict, see des Rotours 1974: 894–5, n. 891.

[46] ZYGJ 1992, 11: 26b; WYYH 869: 1b.

[47] On the political intrigue and coups that culminated with Xuanzong in power, see Skaff 2012: 93–4.

thereafter.[48] Potentially more damaging was Zhang Changzong 張昌宗, a young man in his twenties who together with his half brother dominated the court in the final years of the empress' life. Zhang, who was infamous for his administrative incompetence and corruption, served as chief minister of the Court of the Imperial Stud circa 703 to 705.[49] Further evidence that the claims of the stele rang true comes from two edicts of the early eighth century. Xuanzong's father, Ruizong (r. 684–690, 710–712), ordered state ranches to produce quality horses and sent imperial censors to inspect them.[50] Four years later, Xuanzong ordered that only bureaucrats with knowledge of livestock rearing should fill positions on the horse ranches or serve as regional ranch supervisors. Incompetent personnel were to be demoted and exiled.[51]

Under Xuanzong herds began to expand again. By 725, the number of horses had risen to 430,000 heads, representing an increase of almost 80 per cent since 719. Confirmation that the breeding herds were meeting the needs of the empire comes from an imperial edict of 723 permitting provincial administrators – who had been riding their own horses to conduct state business – to request mounts from the government ranches.[52] The commemorative stele attributes the success to the able management of Wang Maozhong and the five regional ranch supervisors serving under him. In addition to the improved fodder production mentioned above, Wang and his subordinates received credit for administrative efficiencies including increasing stores of grain and hay; collecting taxes in grain on land that formerly was concealed from tax records; reducing embezzlement of horse feed; supplying the army with more than 100,000 pounds of glue manufactured from sinew of dead livestock, probably to make composite bows for soldiers; paying official food rations in cash, rather than grain, in order to conserve fodder for the horses; and selling animal corpses to earn 80,000 bolts of silk to purchase 1,000 slave grooms.[53] By the year of Wang Maozohong's death in 731 the number of horses had increased slightly to 440,000.

The final figures for Xuanzong's reign date to 753 and 754 on the eve of the An Lushan rebellion when herd size had decreased about one quarter to

48 ZZTJ 212: 6518; JTS 186a: 4837–40; Guisso 1978: 60, 130–1, 140–3.
49 ZZTJ 207: 6559; JTS 6: 132; Guisso 1978: 142, 147–53.
50 XTS 50: 1338; des Rotours 1974: 893.
51 CFYG 621: 24b; THY 66: 1146.
52 CFYG 621: 25b; TDZLB 29: 1354.
53 JTS 106: 3252; XTS 121: 4335; ZZTJ 212: 6767; WYYH 869: 3a–4a; ZYGJ 11: 25b–30a; des Rotours 1974: 894–5. The taxes in grain apparently are related to efforts to register land held by tax evaders in the early 720s, see Twitchett 1970: 14–15.

over 325,000. Despite the decline, there were signs of a successful breeding programme because over 200,000 juvenile horses comprised almost two-thirds of ranch herds. In addition, an imperial edict of 753 banned private ranches within 500 *li* (250 km) of Chang'an and Luoyang.[54] The court apparently again feared that excessive numbers of private horses in the capital regions were jeopardizing food supplies.[55] After the An Lushan rebellion broke out in 755, the Tang's ranch system collapsed. By the ninth century, a dynasty that once had hundreds of thousands of mounts was struggling to maintain a breeding herd of several thousand horses.

Factors Influencing Herd Sizes

The above evidence from 677 to 753 demonstrates that the court intermittently adjusted horse management and procurement policies as the herds expanded and declined. While Xuanzong's stele highlights good management of the herds as the key to their growth and decline, other factors were at play. In particular, short-term weather problems and the balance of power in Eastern Eurasia also impacted the horse supply.

The late seventh-century decline in Tang herds is at least partly attributable to severe winter weather. An Yuanshou 安元壽 (607–683), a career military officer perhaps of Sogdian ancestry – whom Gaozong had dispatched to inspect the ranches – reported that 184,900 horses, 11,600 cattle, and 800 herds personnel died or went missing between October 679 and May 681.[56] The number of missing horses represents approximately one quarter of the high point of 706,000 heads. The catastrophic losses must be linked to unusually severe weather that triggered Türk revolts at the same time. North China was either exceptionally cold or arid almost every year in the period from 677 to 682. The most unfavourable weather struck in 681 when the capital region was hit with drought, early frost and famine. Although Ma and Wang argue that the losses resulted from Türk raids, they fail to notice that Türk livestock in the Ordos also were decimated. Only two thirds of the band of warriors who rebelled and founded the Second Türk Empire had mounts. The men survived by hunting game in the mountains apparently because most of their livestock had died.[57] Clearly,

[54]   XTS 50: 1338; THY 66: 1146; des Rotours 1974: 896.

[55]   A shortage of fodder for government horses may be the underlying reason for the ban because 500 *li* also was the distance around the capitals where the government levied a miscellaneous tax in hay to supply the palace herds, see note 31 above and Ma and Wang 1995: 59.

[56]   ZZTJ 202: 6402; CFYG 621 :24a; THY 72: 1302; XTS 50: 1338; des Rotours 1974: 893.

[57]   On the weather and Türks, see Skaff 2012: 273–4. Also see Ma and Wang 1995: 113.

the unfavourable weather played a role in the decline of the Tang herds. Subsequent Türk raids merely compounded an existing problem.

Another factor affecting the ranches was the military balance of power in Eastern Eurasia, where livestock were prized spoils of war. During periods of Tang expansive power, livestock arrived as war plunder and diplomatic gifts. One of the largest known seizures of horses came during an expedition against the Western Türks in 652 when Tang forces defeated the Chuyue and looted a total of 70,000 horses and other livestock.[58] In another type of case, the Tang obtained 50,000 mounts from the Sir-Tardush in 643 as a bride price for a marriage to a Tang princess that never occurred.[59] When the balance of power favoured the Tang, its military defended its ranches and even supplemented its livestock with plunder. These gains must have contributed to the burgeoning ranch herds of the mid-seventh century.

As is more conventionally noted, Tang herds tended to suffer from plunder during times of military weakness. Under Qapaghan Qaghan (r. 694-ca. 715), the Türks reached a pinnacle of military power. He campaigned annually while Empress Wu was on the throne. Several raids are known to have targeted the horse ranches with plunder of 10,000 horses from Longyou in 701, and 100,000 sheep and horses from the Ordos in 702. After Zhongzong succeeded his mother, the raiding continued with 10,000 horses taken from Longyou in 707.[60] These large raids must have contributed to the shortages of horses that are documented by the time Xuanzong reached the throne in 712. Later, the Tang experienced an even more devastating loss during the An Lushan rebellion when Tibet captured the Hexi ranches.[61] During periods of military weakness, particularly the reign of Empress Wu and after the An Lushan rebellion, the ranches suffered substantial depredations.

Personnel

A factor favouring the Tang horse system over the long term was that personnel generally had birth and career patterns connected to North China or the China–Inner Asia borderlands. At the centre of government, emperors

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[58] JTS 4: 70, 109: 3293; XTS 3: 54, 110: 4119, 215b: 6061; CFYG 986: 2b.

[59] JTS 3: 55, 109: 3292, 194b: 5345–6; XTS 110: 4118, 217b: 6136–7; ZZTJ 197: 6199–200; CFYG 978: 22a–23a.

[60] JTS 194a: 5170; XTS 215a: 6047; ZZTJ 207: 6553, 207: 6558, 208: 6607–8. The Türks carried out a total of twenty-five raids in the period from 684 to 711 when Empress Wu and her sons Zhongzong and Ruizong were in power, see Skaff 2012: 44, Appendix A. In most cases the type of plunder is not mentioned.

[61] XTS 50: 1339; des Rotours 1974: 897–8.

and high officials of the Court of the Imperial Stud were familiar with horses because equestrian skills were an important aspect of North Chinese and Eastern Eurasian elite culture. In the provinces, information on low and middle-level personnel is extremely rare, but when available, shows that men had origins in borderland regions, and often were Sogdians or other ethnic minorities.

Tang court culture encouraged interest in horses. Like contemporaries in the social elite of North China, Tang princes and princesses learned to ride at a young age.[62] The horse had such symbolic importance that it became one of the main subjects of Tang court art, including portraits and figurines of elite women and girls riding astride the saddle.[63] At least two Tang emperors, Taizong (r. 626–649) and Xuanzong, were connoisseurs of fine horses. For example, prior to taking the throne, Taizong admired fine horses that he spotted on the battlefield. Moreover, while he reigned as emperor, he famously ordered that six of his favourite warhorses be immortalized in fine stone reliefs at his tomb. He also wrote a poem about each one.[64] Xuanzong's imperial stable seems to have been exceptional, comprising 10,000 fine steeds including 100 dancing horses that performed on his birthday each year.[65]

We also have evidence that these two emperors' passion for equines as a leisure activity spilled over into horse administration. For example, Taizong showed favour towards relatively low-ranked men whom he valued for their horse expertise. On at least one occasion, he personally inspected some of the breeding ranches.[66] Xuanzong's concern for horse administration may have originated when he headed the Court of Imperial Stud under his father.[67] Xuanzong also betrayed his interest in horse administration by commissioning two commemorative steles meant to glorify his horse officials and their improvements to the horse system. One was the above-mentioned 'Stele Eulogizing the Longyou Ranches'. The other was 'Stele Eulogizing the Eight Horse Depots of Qi, Bin, Jing and Ning Prefectures'. Though not directly connected to the breeding ranches, the latter inscription celebrates the improved management of the capital region horse depots that transferred horses, nursed sick and injured ones, and produced feed.[68] Xuanzong's steles seek to persuade that he and his great-grandfather

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[62] Wright 1976: 20.
[63] Wu 1997: 78–9; Cooke 2000: 46–56, 140–63.
[64] Zhou 2009: 78–81, 174; Ma and Wang 1995: 110.
[65] Kroll 1981.
[66] ZZTJ 198: 6239; Zhou 2009: 188; Ma and Wang 1995: 110.
[67] JTS 8: 165; XTS 5: 121.
[68] 'Qi, Bin, Jing, Ning si zhou ba mafang beisong'《岐邠涇寧四州八馬坊碑頌》in QTWX 361: 4139–41; Wang 1982.

Taizong surpassed other emperors in the size of their herds because they chose effective administrators with knowledge of equine care, such as Zhang Wansui and Wang Maozhong, to work in the horse system.

Although the steles do not mention the pedigree of horse administrators, it is noteworthy that Zhang Wansui and Wang Maozhong had borderland roots and military skills. Zhang was a native of the borderland periphery town of Mayi 馬邑 south-west of modern Datong in Shanxi Province. He enters the historical record in 617 serving as an adherent to the Northern Shanxi rebel Liu Wuzhou 劉武周, who became one of the Tang's rivals for power in North China. Zhang played a key role as an assassin who ambushed the local Sui prefect and displayed the head to the populace to announce Liu's uprising. During the ensuing warfare, Zhang served as a general under Liu, but eventually defected to the Tang. Zhang's first known service to the Tang was as chief steward in charge of palace horses and transportation. Apparently Zhang skillfully managed the palace herds because in 641 Taizong promoted him to a leading position in the Court of Imperial Stud.[69]

Wang Maozhong, the other head of the Court of Imperial Stud credited with outstanding success, also had borderland roots. Wang's father was from an aristocratic lineage in Koguryŏ, a kingdom straddling modern North Korea and Manchuria, a borderland region where forests, grasslands and farmland come together. After the Tang conquered Koguryŏ in 668, the father became a slave in the Tang imperial palace. Though the son inherited his father's putatively low status, he became a privileged member of Xuanzong's entourage. Before Xuanzong ascended the throne, Wang, a talented rider and archer, was one of the prince's bodyguards. Whenever Xuanzong went out in public, Wang and another slave preceded the prince. Each held a drawn bow loaded with an arrow. When Xuanzong consolidated his power over the throne in 712, Wang led a force of 300 men who killed factional rivals. At this point Wang's career trajectory began to parallel Zhang Wansui's. After being appointed to supervise the palace stables, Wang's success at managing the emperor's herds and fields earned a promotion to chief minister of the Court of Imperial Stud in 719. Six years later, when the horse population had risen to 430,000 heads, Xuanzong honoured

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[69] JTS 55: 2253–4; XTS 50: 1337–8, 86: 3711–13; THY 66: 1145; TMHX 646; ZYGJ 11: 26b; WYYH 869: 3a; des Rotours 1974: 887–9. Some sources state that Zhang was vice minister of the Court of Imperial Stud (XTS 50; THY), but his great-grandson's tomb epitaph claims that he was chief minister (TMHX). The most authoritative source – Xuanzong's commemorative stele composed sixty years after Zhang's death (ZYGJ; WYYH) – uses the anachronistic term, Chamberlain of the Imperial Stud (*taipu* 太僕), which implies that Zhang headed the agency.

Wang and his subordinates with the stele. Wang retained his position for a relatively long tenure of twelve years until he was accused, probably falsely, of treason and executed.[70]

Unfortunately, there is only limited information about the activities of other chief and vice ministers of the Court of Imperial Stud, but some demonstrate life and career patterns that would have prepared them for the job.[71] Almost all of them are from North China and held other frontier and/or military posts at points in their careers. Some, like Wang Maozhong, came from minority ethnicity backgrounds. Methods of entry into their positions varied. Several are known to have gained eligibility for government service by passing exams, and subsequently occupied positions in the horse system during careers moving between civil and military posts. An example is Wang Jun 王晙 (ca. 660–732), a member of an eminent family originally from Hebei. After passing a *mingjing* 明經 examination, requiring rote knowledge of the Confucian classics, he moved between civil and military positions in central and provincial government. His service as vice minister of the Court of Imperial Stud was one stop in a long career.[72]

More frequently we see ministers who apparently gained their positions through the (*yin* 蔭or 廕) hereditary privilege, which granted eligibility for government posts to sons, grandsons and great grandsons of officials.[73] This probably explains how Zhang Wansui's son and grandson obtained leading positions in the Court of the Imperial Stud. The grandson, Zhang Jingshun 張景順 (fl. 725–27), received praise in Xuanzong's stele for his service as vice minister under Wang Maozhong, and later was promoted to probationary chief minister.[74] In another case, the son and grandnephew of one of the Tang's most famous generals, Li Shiji 李世勣, held the post of vice minister. Like Zhang Wansui, Li originally served a competing warlord in the civil war at the end of the Sui before submitting to the Tang. Later

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[70] Skaff 2012: 276.

[71] There is a list of thirty-four men who led the Court of the Imperial Stud (THY 66: 1145). Twenty-two of the men have biographical information in other historical sources, but only Zhang Wansui and Wang Maozhong's service in the horse system is described. I have identified ten other men not on the list, but their activities in the Court of Imperial Stud also are not mentioned.

[72] JTS 93: 2985–89; XTS 111: 4153–6; ZZTJ 211: 6704–5. On the *mingjing* examination, see McMullen 1988: 23–4.

[73] On the *yin* privilege, see JTS 42: 1805; XTS 45: 1172–3.

[74] Zhang Wansui's son, Zhang Silian 張思廉, served in the Court of Imperial Stud in the late seventh century with sources disagreeing on whether he was chief or vice minister, see THY 66: 1145; TMHX: 646. For Zhang Jingshun, see JTS 103: 3191, 196a: 5229; XTS 133: 4547, 216a: 6083; ZZTJ 212: 6767, 213: 6776; WYYH 869: 3a; ZYGJ 11: 29a; TMHX: 646–7.

he commanded Tang frontier garrisons in northern Shanxi.[75] His grand-nephew, Li Lingwen 李令問, while serving as vice minister in 713, was a member along with Wang Maozhong of Xuanzong's band of trusted sub-ordinates who killed members of a rival faction. Evidence of Li Lingwen's ongoing borderland contacts comes from his family's marriage ties to Uighur elites living in Hexi (modern Gansu).[76] A somewhat analogous case of political, marital and borderland connections is Ashina Jian 阿史那瞋 who served as chief minister. His father was an elite Türk, Ashina Zhong, who had surrendered to the Tang in 630. Taizong gave Zhong the great honour of a marriage to a Tang imperial clanswoman, making the son, Jian, a member of the extended imperial family.[77] Evidently, the Li, Zhang, and Ashina families obtained positions in the Imperial Stud because they not only had political and marriage connections, but also continued to cultivate skills at warfare and horsemanship.

Middle and lower level horse system personnel are even less well docu-mented than those at the upper levels, but extant evidence still points to the importance of borderland backgrounds. There are at least a few seventh-century ranch directors whose tombs and epitaphs have been excavated. Wang Delun 王德倫 (642–731) from Taiyuan, Hedong in the borderland-periphery, was an ethnic Han. His brief tomb inscription only mentions what was probably his highest position as director of a ranch in Yuanzhou (modern Guyuan, Ningxia).[78] Two men with the same surname, but belonging to different lineages – Shi Daode 史道德 (613–678) and Shi Tiebang 史鐵棒 (623–666) – were borderland elites whose ancestors lived in the Hexi corridor in the fifth and sixth centuries and moved to Yuanzhou during the Sui dynasty. Some of Shi Tiebang's rela-tives proudly claimed descent from Sogdian nobles of Central Asia. Many men of both lineages served the Western Wei (535–556), Northern Zhou (557–581), Sui and Tang dynasties as mid-level cavalry officers, imper-ial bodyguards and local officials. Although Shi Daode and Shi Tiebang have no known kinship, their career paths ran parallel to each other. Both gained appointments in the capital guard corps, most likely via *yin* her-editary privilege because their fathers were Tang officials. Later, they were promoted to become directors of ranches, but like Wang Delun, never

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[75] JTS 67: 2483–4; XTS 93: 3817–8. On his son Li Siwen's 李思文 career, see JTS 67: 2483–92, 77: 2678, 84: 2803; 194a: 5166; XTS 50: 1337, 76: 3478, 3481, 93: 3817–24, 108: 4087, 215a: 6043; ZZTJ 203: 6427, 6433; THY 66:1145.

[76] JTS 8: 169, 103: 3191–2, 195: 5198; XTS 133: 4547–8, 217a: 6114; ZZTJ 210: 6683, 213: 6776–9.

[77] JTS 109: 3290.

[78] TMH 2: 1439–40.

rose to higher positions, perhaps due to lack of connections in the upper reaches of administration. Shi Tiebang's family was not pleased with his stalled career. Avoiding the platitudes of Confucian funerary epitaphs and modern obituaries, the inscription complains that his talents exceeded the requirements of the position. 'A jeweled thorn used to fend off magpies. A cauldron big enough to cook an ox used to boil a chicken.'[79] Despite the signs of discontent, Shi Tiebang exemplifies how ranch directors with borderland roots must have contributed to the burgeoning Tang horse population in the mid-seventh century.

Low-level horse personnel rarely appear in received Tang historical sources, but documents excavated at Turfan provide a few glimpses of horse specialists, often with foreign names. Two horse-purchase commissioners, working for frontier garrisons, travelled more than 1,000 kilometres north-west from the borderland Hexi and Shuofang garrisons to buy horses in the Turfan region in 728. One was Commandant Ju 鞠, whose surname appears Chinese, and the other was Mi Zhentuo 米真陀 whose surname is Sogdian and given name is transliterated from a foreign language into Chinese.[80] In addition, the names of two veterinarians also are preserved in postal system documents, but it is unclear whether they were among the 600 veterinarians employed by the Court of Imperial Stud. One is Mu Bosi 目波斯 travelling via donkey.[81] The other is Cao Tuoniao 曹馳鳥, a veterinarian entrusted with feeding five fine horses in May 754.[82] Mu Bosi's given name literally means 'Persia' so obviously indicates foreign ancestry. Cao often can be a Sogdian surname, and his unusual given name, Tuoniao – literally meaning 'Ostrich' – could also be a Chinese transliteration of a foreign name. Once again, we see that men of various ethnicities found employment in the Tang government because of specialized knowledge of livestock.

Finally, some grooms are mentioned in the sources. One case involves ethnic Bo grooms of the Sichuan-Tibet highlands, where a small breed of Sichuan horse (*shuma* 蜀馬) was raised. The 'Stele Eulogizing the Longyou Ranches' praises Wang Maozhong for purchasing 1,000 Bo slaves to serve as grooms at a price of 80,000 bolts of monetary silk. Why

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[79] TMHX: 238–9; Luo 1996: 78–84, 93–176, 211–16. Shi Daode has conventionally been identified as a Sogdian, but I argue that there is no evidence to support this position (Skaff forthcoming).

[80] Skaff 2012: 263–4.

[81] Ast.III.3.10 in Chen 1995: 124, ln. 117.

[82] 73TAM506:4/32-1 in TCWS 10: 59; TCWS-plates 4: 424, lns. 46, 48.

the Bo grooms were sought after is unknown, but the premium price of eighty bolts of silk paid for each slave – double the highest known contemporary figure on the northwestern frontier – may reflect their specialized training.[83] Many names of grooms appear in Turfan postal system documents. Unlike the Bo grooms working on ranches, those at Turfan do not seem to be horse specialists. They typically have Chinese names, for example Lü Chengzu 呂承祖 who was feeding horses at one postal station in the seventh and eighth months of 754.[84] His two-month stint of work demonstrates that he most probably was a local resident fulfilling miscellaneous or special labour service duties owed under the Tang tax system.[85]

Conclusion

The Tang horse system demonstrates the significance of the expansive Tang Empire's linkages to Inner Asia. The points of contact were the China–Inner Asia borderlands that contained extensive grasslands and multiethnic inhabitants with customary knowledge of horse rearing. Though the breeding ranch system derived from Chinese administrative traditions, good management required not only well-designed bureaucratic structures and regulations, but also skilled individuals to fill administrative positions. When the ranches were most successful, natives of the North China borderlands and borderland periphery not only worked on the ranches, but also in the highest levels of administration. Nonetheless, the system proved to be vulnerable to military and environmental setbacks. The health of the herds and safety of the ranches relied upon normal weather patterns and a balance of power favouring the Tang. Though the ranches were able to recover from the weather disasters of the late seventh century, when the Tang lost control of the China–Inner Asia borderlands in the mid-eighth century, its ranch system went into a permanent decline.

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[83] XTS 121: 4335; WYYH 869: 4a; ZYGJ 11: 29b–30a. The Tang postal relay system used *shuma* in mountainous regions of South China, see TLD 5: 33b; Smith 1991: 261–3. On prices of slaves in the north-west, see Trombert and de la Vaissière 2007: 26–7, 33–5.

[84] 73TAM506:4/32–4 in TCWS 10: 92–100;TCWS-plates 4: 447–52.

[85] On local labour obligation, see Twitchett 1970: 30–1.

Table 2.3 Tang prefectures with ranches[86]

Tang Prefecture	Tang Circuit (Modern Province)	Long. °E	Lat. °N	Human pop., 742	Pastoral or hunting products, or ethnic minority peoples	Confirmed dates of ranches or their loss	Pref. Type	Citations
Lánzhou 蘭州	Longyou (Gansu)	103.94	36.33	21,386	Musk deer; tarbagan marmot; haircloth; wild horsehide; former territory of Western Qiang.	Ca. 630?; 664–5; fell to Tibet in 762.	B	JTS 40:1633–4; XTS 40:1042, 48:1255, 50:1337–8; YHJX 3:59, 39:986–8, 1002; TLD 174:4547
Qinzhou 秦州	Longyou (Gansu)	105.66	34.86	109,700	Yak tails	Ca. 630?; 664–5	BP	JTS 40:1630; XTS 40:1040, 48:1255, 50:1337–8; YHJX 3:59, 39:979–80, 1005, n. 13
Weizhou 渭州	Longyou (Gansu)	104.63	35.00	24,520	Musk deer	Ca. 630?; 664–665	BP	JTS 40:1632; XTS 40:1041, 48:1255, 50:1337–8; YHJX 3:59, 39: 982–4
Binzhou 邠州 or 豳州	Guannei (Shaanxi)	108.07	35.03	135,250		Ca. 630–665	BP	JTS 38:1404; XTS 37:967, 50:1337; YHJX 3:60–3

Table 2.3 Tang prefectures with ranches[86]

Tang Prefecture	Tang Circuit (Modern Province)	Long. °E	Lat. °N	Human pop., 742	Pastoral or hunting products, or ethnic minority peoples	Confirmed dates of ranches or their loss	Pref. Type	Citations
Fengxiang fu 鳳翔府 or Qizhou 岐州	Guannei (Shaanxi)	107.38	34.52	380,463		Sui (ca. 581-ca. 618); ca. 630–665; abolished in 820	BP	JTS 38:966–7; XTS 37:961, 50:1337, 1339; YHJX 2:40–3
Huizhou 會州	Guannei (Gansu)	104.68	36.56	26,660	Felt saddle covers; camel haircloth; deer tongue; deer tail	Ca. 630?	BP	JTS 38:1418; XTS 37:973; YHJX 3:59, 98
Jingzhou 經州	Guannei (Gansu)	107.35	35.33	186,849		ca. 630–665; 763–768; Tibet controlled parts of territory from 784–788.	BP	JTS 38:1404–5; XTS 37:968, 50:1337; YHJX 3:55–7
Ningzhou 寧州	Guannei (Gansu)	107.92	35.50	224,837	5-colour felt saddle cover	ca. 630–665	BP	JTS 38:1406; XTS 37:969, 50:1337; YHJX 3:60–3
Yanzhou 鹽州	Guannei (Shaanxi)	107.59	37.59	16,665	An unknown type of cattle or oxen.	After 665	BP	JTS 38:1417; XTS 37:973, 48:1255, 50:1337–8; YHJX 3:97

Table 2.3 (*cont.*)

Tang Prefecture	Tang Circuit (Modern Province)	Long. °E	Lat. °N	Human pop., 742	Pastoral or hunting products, or ethnic minority peoples	Confirmed dates of ranches or their loss	Pref. Type	Citations
Xiazhou 夏州	Guannei (Shaanxi)	108.79	37.59	53,104	Felt; *kaymak*; compound bow; Tangut resettled in area in 690.	Ca. 680	B	JTS 38:1414; XTS 36:952, 37:973–4, 50:1338; YHJX 4:99–100; CFYG 621:24a; THY 72:1302; ZZTJ 202:6402
Yuanzhou 原州	Guannei (Ningxia)	106.27	36.01	33,146	Felt; felt saddle covers; temporary site to supervise surrendered Türks in 632.	664–5; Headquarters of horse system.	BP	JTS 38:1407; XTS 37:968, 48:1255, 50:1337–8; YHJX 3:57–60
Lanzhou 嵐州	Hedong (Shanxi)	111.56	38.70	84,006	Musk; bear hides; Xiongnu invaded at end of Han; Sui long wall in north; site of garrison.	After 665	BP	JTS 39:1485; XTS 39:1005, 48:1255, 50:1337–8; YHJX 14:395–7

Key: B=Borderland, BP=Borderland Periphery (See Skaff 2012: 24–41 for definitions.)

[86]   Ma and Wang are able to more precisely date and locate some ranches (1995: 15–25). For more information on the methodology used to compile the data, see Skaff 2012: 315–16.

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Abbreviations

CFYG = Wang Qinruo et al. 1960. *Cefu yuangui*. 1642 ed. 12 Vols. Beijing.

JTS = Liu Xu et al. 1975. *Jiu Tang shu*. 16 Vols. Beijing.

QTWX = Dong Gao et al. 1999. *Quan Tang wen xinbian*. Zhou Shaoliang (ed.). Changchun.

SS = Wei Zheng. 1973. *Sui shu*. 6 Vols. Beijing.

TBYJ = Li Quan. 1988. *Taibo yinjing*. Beijing and Shenyang.

TCWS = Guojia wenwu ju gu wenxian yanjiu shi, et al. (eds.) 1981–1991. *Tulufan chutu wenshu*. 10 Vols. Beijing.

TCWS-plates = Tang Zhangru et al. (eds.) 1992–1996. *Tulufan chutu wenshu*. 4 Vols. Beijing.

TDZLB = Li Ximi et al. (eds.) 2003. *Tang da zhaoling ji bubian*. Shanghai.

THY = Wang Pu. 1967. *Tang hui yao*. 4 Vols. Taibei.

TLD = Li Longji et al. 1991. *Da Tang liu dian*. Uchida Tomoo, et al. (eds.) 1724 Konoe Iehiro (ed.). Xi'an.

TLSY = Zhangsun Wuji. 1983. *Tang lü shuyi*. Liu Junwen (ed.). Beijing.

TMH = Zhou Shaoliang (ed.) 1992. *Tangdai muzhi huibian*. 2 Vols. Shanghai.

TMHX = Zhou Shaoliang (ed.) 2001. *Tangdai muzhi huibian xuji*. Shanghai.

WYYH = Li Fang et al. 1966. *Wenyuan yinghua*. 6 Vols. Beijing.

XTS = Ouyang Xiu. 1975. *Xin Tang shu*. 20 Vols. Beijing.

YHJX = Li Jifu. [813] 1983. *Yuanhe jun-xian tuzhi*. 2 Vols. Beijing.

ZYGJ = Zhang Yue. 1992. *Zhang Yan'gong ji*. Shanghai.

ZZTJ = Guang Sima. 1956. *Zizhi tongjian*. Beijing.

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3 | Cimmerians and the Scythians: the Impact of Nomadic Powers on the Assyrian Empire and the Ancient Near East

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Introduction

The Cimmerians and the Scythians in the Near East are mentioned mostly in Assyrian texts dating from the late-eighth and early-to-mid-seventh centuries BCE.[1] Mounted pastoral nomadism dominated Eurasia during this period.[2] Presumably, the Cimmerians and the Scythians took routes via parts of the Caucasus (and/or, less likely, via Turkmenistan) into different parts of the Near East. Herodotus writes that the Scythians, who themselves were forced out of Central Asia, forced the Cimmerians from their homeland, with the Cimmerians migrating into Anatolia and the Scythians chasing them into Media, both people using different passes of the Caucasus (*Histories* 1.15, 103–106; 4.11). This recalls migrations from later periods of Inner Asian history and hence the account contains genuine historical facts.[3] A specific chronology, however, is lacking. Even if a conflict between the Cimmerians and the Scythians produced the first migrations into the Near East, there is no contemporary primary source to confirm or deny that this happened in the late-eighth century BCE. It is therefore important not to connect (either positively or negatively) the account in Herodotus with the earliest mention of the Cimmerians and the Scythians in Assyrian texts. There is no indication (or denial) in the ancient Near Eastern texts that the Scythians chased the Cimmerians or that the rivalry between them was any different to the rivalry between other polities once they were settled in the Near East.

This chapter will specifically focus on the political transformations that took place in Anatolia and the Near East as a result of the activities of the Cimmerian and Scythian nomadic powers established between the late-eighth century BCE and mid-to-late-seventh century BCE.

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[1] Lanfranchi 1990; Ivantchik 1993; Strobel 2012.
[2] Davis-Kimball et al. 1995; Koryakova and Epimakhov 2007.
[3] Kim 2010: 120.

Cimmerians and Scythians as 'Nomadic' Powers

The earliest archaeological evidence for Eurasians in the Near East arguably dates to the early-eighth or perhaps the late-ninth century BCE.[4] Eurasian peoples were present in Anatolia and other parts of the Near East as mercenaries, adventurers, or even small groups of settlers.[5] This could have provided the Cimmerians and the Scythians with the knowledge they needed to plan their settlement in the Near East as nomadic states in the late-eighth and early-seventh centuries BCE. Distinguishing the Cimmerians and the Scythians is a problem in archaeology.[6] The ancient texts, however, differentiate between the Scythian and Cimmerian polities. Ethnicity and its potential archaeological markers are not as relevant. Steppe polities incorporated different ethnic elements. One may argue that mentions of the Cimmerians in ancient texts sometimes actually refer to the Scythians but there are cases when they were differentiated without doubt.[7] Query SAA 4 24, for example, describes the Cimmerians and the Scythians as separate threats to the land of Ḫubuškia during the time of Esarhaddon (r. 681–669 BCE). This and similar texts may be emphasized to argue that the Cimmerians and the Scythians were always distinguished by the Assyrians.[8]

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[4]   A grave discovered at İmirler in Amasya, Turkey, contains goods (especially a bronze horse-bit with stirrup shaped ends) comparable with those from Early Scythian sites, including Aržan I in Siberia which dates to the late-ninth or early-eighth century BCE; Hellmuth 2008: 105–9. Recent finds of (funerary?) human statues with Eurasian features in the Sidekan/Mdjeser region of northern Iraq, mentioned further below, probably date to the seventh or sixth century BCE; Marf 2016: 190–5. The Urartian place and ethnic name *Išgigulū* attested in the inscriptions (for an unidentified Transcaucasian area, perhaps somewhere between Lakes Çıldır and Sevan; Diakonoff and Kashkai 1981: 45) of Argišti I (the second quarter of the eighth century BCE) and Rusa II (c. 685–645 BCE) may perhaps reflect the Scythian ethnonym (Van Loon 1966: 15n69, rejected in König 1967: 97n4). No names attested in these texts can be corroborated with any data in Assyrian or Greek texts concerning the Scythians. Further evidence is needed to prove the proposed link. I notice some superficial phonetic similarity between *Išgigulū* (alternatively, but less probably, read *Išgiyulū*; for the GU/*yu* interchange, see Diakonoff 1963: 30–1; Van Loon 1966: 15n69; the initial vowel was perhaps purely orthographic and not pronounced) and Σκολότοι, which Herodotus (*Histories* 4.6) writes was the Scythians' endonym whereas Σκύθης was the Greek exonym. The Greek version relates to *Iškuzāya/Askuzāya/Ašguzāya/Asguzāya*, the Assyrian rendering of the Scythian name and may stem from an adaptation of the Scythian ethnonym separate from an earlier Urartian adaptation of the Scythian endonym if indeed *Išgigulū* does relate to this endonym.

[5]   One may object that the evidence from İmirler does not suffice to imply the presence of Eurasian peoples in the Near East. The İmirler evidence, however, is striking, and was itself recognized only after illicit excavations. Tracing nomads in the archaeological record is an almost impossible task; Cribb 1991.

[6]   Ivantchik 2001a; Hellmuth 2008.

[7]   Diakonoff 1981: 114–19.

[8]   Ivantchik 2001b: 318.

The Neo-Babylonian term *Gimir* ('Cimmerian') referred in general to the Saka/Scythians, but this is only in the Old Persian period texts.[9] *Gimir* compares better with the generalizing term 'Scythian' used for nomads in Greek literature. The Babylonian-writing scribes chose *Gimir* to refer to the same type of nomads. The historical origin of this usage remains unknown.

The Assyrian reports for Sargon II (r. 722–705 BCE) name a land Gamir ('Cimmeria'). It was a region next to Guriania.[10] Guriania was either Quriani (*Qu-ri-a-né-né*; perhaps the upper Kur region in Transcaucasia) in Urartian texts or more likely Guria (*Gu-ri-a-i-né*; a region east of Lake Sevan).[11] Strabo places the land of the Gouranians near Media.[12] Gamir was probably east of Urartu and possibly north/north-east of Mannaea (a land south of Lake Urmiya in western Iran).

The core territory of the Scythians in the Near East, named Scythia (*[KUR]Iškuza*; SAA 4 20), was probably somewhere in Transcaucasia or western Iran, within range of the peripheries of Urartu and Mannaea. The Scythians during the time of Esarhaddon were active in western Iran only.[13] The distance between Scythia, Urartu and Mannaea is not stated in cuneiform texts but the Book of Jeremiah (51:27) mentions Scythia, i.e. 'Ashkenaz' (אשכנז), *A/Iškuzāya* in Neo-Assyrian, alongside 'Minni' (מני; Mannaea) and 'Ararat' (אררט; Urartu), together as 'kingdoms' (ממלכה).[14] One may assume that Scythia, Urartu and Mannaea were at similar relative distances. Herodotus writes that Scythians passed Colchis and entered Media.[15] The 'Scythia' known to Near Eastern sources may have been a Transcaucasian or western Iranian area.[16]

There were two groups of Cimmerians, one in Anatolia, north-west of Assyria and the other in western Iran.[17] I propose that they were a multi-tribal steppe polity divided into larger groups, fluctuating according to political developments. This compares with the Turkic Oghuz tribes whose ancient lore, preserved in the medieval copies of the *Oğuzname*, refers to

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[9]   Zadok 1985: 139–41.

[10] SAA 5 92: 5–6.

[11] Diakonoff and Kaskhai 1981: 37 (Guria), 70–71 (Quriani).

[12] *Geography* 11.14.14.

[13] The Scythians were active in Media, Mannaea and parts of western Iran; Starr 1990: lviii-lxii.

[14] These kingdoms were treated as vassals of the Medes and the Persians who would later invade Babylon under King Cyrus. The dating of Jeremiah 51 is unclear. The earliest possible date is sometime during the exilic period of the Jewish community during the time of Nebuchadnezar II (r. 604-562 BCE). The Enemy from the North in Jeremiah may refer to the Scythians but more likely refers to the Babylonians who destroyed the Kingdom of Judah; Vaggione 1973.

[15] *Histories* 1.104.

[16] Kashkay 1997.

[17] Ivantchik 2001b: 319–21.

the ideal of a single kingdom ruled through two wings; each wing ruled by the member of the same dynasty and comprising several tribes.[18] A branch of the Cimmerians migrated to Anatolia at some point in time. The earliest extant Assyrian reference to this effect is the mention of 'Teušpa the Cimmerian' in 679 BCE in Cybistra, Konya-Ereğli region, Central Anatolia (discussed further below). The precise whereabouts of their Cimmerian core area is currently unknown. The Armenian tradition of naming Cappadocia as *Gamirk* owes to an association with Gomer (גמר) of the Bible (Greek Septuagint Γαμερ).[19] Biblical Gomer may go back to the practice of naming a part of the Konya Plain or a nearby region as *Gamir/Cimmeria, similar to Gamir in late-eighth century BCE western Iran as discussed above.

Several Cimmerian tribes each probably inhabited a different area. Some were active in Phrygia (SAA 4 1). The mid-seventh century BCE witnessed the dominance of Anatolian Cimmerians under King Tugdamme (classical Lygdamis).[20] The Cimmerians then controlled territories from Lydia and Phrygia up to Cilicia and the frontiers of a declining Urartian state. After the death of Tugdamme c. 640 BCE, the Cimmerians dispersed. Some were then in Rough Cilicia.

The Cimmerians and the Scythians were each led by a supreme king and a dynasty. Late-eighth century reports addressing Sargon II refer to 'the Cimmerian' (*Gimirāya*), the leader who fought the Urartians.[21] A foreign king could be named by his ethnonym. Midas the Great of Phrygia was sometimes called *Muškāya* ('the Muškean').[22] 'Teušpa the Cimmerian' was a contemporary of Esarhaddon.[23] Assurbanipal's contemporary, Tugdamme, was the most powerful Cimmerian king; he was even called 'king of the world' (*šar kiššati*).[24] His successor was named Sandakšatru in (Rough?) Cilicia.

The first Scythian leader known to the Assyrians was 'Išpakāya the Scythian'.[25] Next was Bartatua, 'the king of Scythia (^KUR*Iškuza*)'.[26] He is Protothyes (Προτοθύης), mentioned by Herodotus in the story of his son,

[18] Agacanov 2002: 155.
[19] Diakonoff and Kashkai 1981: 71. I thank Zsolt Simon for drawing my attention to the Septuagint form. Any error in interpretation belongs to me alone.
[20] This is the time between Gyges' first plea to Assyria (c. 665 BCE) for help against the Cimmerians up to the time of Tugdamme's death c. 640 BCE; Grayson 1980.
[21] E.g. SAA 5 144: r. 5.
[22] E.g. SAA 1 1.
[23] RINAP 4 1 iii 43–46 in Leichty 2011: 18; ABC 14: 12 in Grayson 1975: 125.
[24] SAA 10 100; Adalı 2011: 125–6.
[25] Leichty 2011: 29–30.
[26] SAA 4 20.

the Scythian king Madyes (Μαδύης).[27] Greek traditions claim Madyes ruled upper Asia for a period (discussed further below).

Agro-pastoralism can be associated with a complicated political organization. The case of the Huns, their sub-kings and sophisticated bureaucracy serving the supreme king is discussed by Kim in Chapter 1. The Han Chinese historian Sima Qian (*Shiji* 110:9b–10b) described the organization of the Xiongnu in the first-century BCE. Several commanders and governors ruled over different territorial districts, the supreme ruler oversaw them, and the princes and nobles were divided into Eastern and Western groups. The Cimmerians were divided into groups as mentioned above. For the Scythians, Herodotus (*Histories* 4.66) mentions nomarchs in charge of provinces; nomarchs are otherwise mentioned by Herodotus in regard to administrative units in Egypt and Persia. The Scythian nomarchs were under the authority of three Scythian ruling dynasties (*Histories* 4.5–7). The Black Sea Scythians presented themselves collectively as an *ethnos* consisting of the Paralatai, the Auchatae, the Catiari, and the Traspies tribes. The Paralatai provided three ruling dynasties dividing Scythia into three kingdoms. The divine justification for their rule was told to Herodotus as a myth of origin. Even if the precise details and names could be disputed, the tradition known to Herodotus has parallels in Eurasian steppe history.[28] The agro-pastoralist character of Scythian society is underscored by the mention of Scythian agriculturalists and towns.[29]

The Cimmerians also ruled over an urban landscape with their council of leaders. Texts from the time of Assurbanipal (r. 668–c.627 BCE) refer to Cimmerian city-lords (EN URU.MEŠ) bordering the eastern frontiers of Lydia.[30] The term *bēl āli* ('city lord') was a typical Assyrian term for a military and political leader settled in a given fortress and territory, usually applied to Iranian city-lords and their settlements.[31] The Assyrians recognized Cimmerian city-rulers in central-west Anatolia and considered them akin to their Median counterparts in western Iran. These Cimmerian city-lords are yet to be localized. The territories controlled by the Cimmerians in Anatolia fluctuated according to their political and military fortunes. Tugdamme is reputed to have had a capital city by the name of Harzalle.[32] While preparing for an invasion of Assyria, Tugdamme faced a rebellion of

[27]   *Histories* 1.103.

[28]   Kim 2009.

[29]   Herodotus, *Histories* 4.17–18.

[30]   Borger 1996: 31.

[31]   Liverani 2003: 5–7.

[32]   Borger 1996: 196.

Cimmerian warlords and held 'a council of his troops' (UKKIN ERÍN.ḪI.A-*šú*).[33] The phenomenon of holding council of Cimmerian kings (Βασιλέες) during periods of internal strife and disagreement, is mentioned by Herodotus (*Histories* 4.11).

The definition of the ancient nomadic state used here is informed by the available evidence presented in this chapter. The nomadic state is a state with territorial boundaries, pastoralist and urban elements, structures of authority operated by rulers of tribes and the military elite, and finally a ruling dynasty. The definition of what constitutes a nomadic power or state should not be determined by anachronistic ideas of the state as an entity beyond tribal loyalties. The Cimmerians and Scythians had established nomadic states in parts of Anatolia and western Iran by the late-eighth and early-seventh centuries BCE. They were agro-pastoralists who controlled and managed urban landscapes and territorial boundaries.[34] Their polities assumed structures of higher authority. The Cimmerians were divided into several tribes distributed across Anatolia and western Iran. The Scythians recognized in Assyrian texts, on the other hand, ruled over a single kingdom in Transcaucasia or western Iran.

Geopolitical Changes

The late-eighth century began in the Near East with the Assyrian Empire dominating all areas from central and Eastern Anatolia to western Iran and Egypt by the times of Sargon II and Sennacherib (r. 705–681 BCE).[35] Urartu (capital Van, eastern Turkey), Phrygia (capital Gordion, central-west Turkey), Babylonia (though subdued several times by the Assyrians), Egypt and Elam (capital Susa, south-western Iran) were strong contenders on their respective frontiers. Owing to their own geographical boundaries, the contending powers also had their own frontiers to guard. The Assyrians had established themselves strongly in their core area of northern Iraq (capital Nineveh from the time of Sennacherib onwards), as well as North Syria, Plain Cilicia and the Upper Tigris region in south-eastern Turkey.[36]

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[33] Borger 1996: 196.
[34] Boundaries fluctuated in ancient times but this also applied to so-called sedentary societies. For the case of the Assyrian Empire, see Parker 2002.
[35] Radner 2006.
[36] Matney et al. 2012; Köroğlu 1998; Lehmann 1998; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 363, 377–88; Gates 2004. I am grateful to Gunnar Lehmann, Marie-Henriette Gates and Kemalettin Köroğlu for bibliographical support.

Beyond these areas, especially in their Anatolian and Iranian frontiers, the Assyrians had less control over local rulers who in turn engaged rival great powers to bargain for their own interests.[37] Urartu had established a system of fortresses, provincial centres and other installations over regional communities in Eastern Anatolia and parts of western Iran.[38] The Phrygian kingdom based in Gordion was led in the late-eighth century by Midas the Great, with zones of influence in central-west and Central Anatolia and parts of Cilicia.[39] The Elamites were the primary power in south-western Iran. Different factions of their elite either supported Babylonia or Assyria.[40] In western Iran and the Zagros region, there were multiple polities weaker than Assyria, Urartu or Elam: Zagros polities, Median city-states, regions of Mannaea, and Ellipi (northern Luristan?).[41]

At some point, the Urartians viewed the presence of the Cimmerians in western Iran as a threat. The Urartian king launched a campaign but suffered a major defeat. The Cimmerians launched a counter-campaign, closing in on Muṣaṣir, home to the Temple of Haldi, the chief god of Urartu.[42] The previous history of the conflict is unknown. There was also a rebellion against the Urartian king who was then killed (SAA 5 93; the king is not named in the letters, he may be Melarṭua or Rusa I); how this relates to the defeat of the Urartians at the hands of the Cimmerians around 714 BCE is unclear.[43]

Urartu remained a substantial power, at least under Rusa II (c. 685–645 BCE), during the aftermath of the Cimmerian disaster and the defeat at the hands of Sargon II in 714 BCE.[44] After the reign of Argišti II (r. c. 708 BCE), Rusa II carried out major building projects around Lake Van, Bastam (Iran), and near Erevan.[45] Later in his reign, the Urartian king accommodated

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[37] Summers 2009; Melville 2010; Radner 2012.

[38] Köroğlu 2011.

[39] Berndt-Ersöz 2008; Vassileva 2008.

[40] Waters 2000.

[41] Levine 1973; Levine 1974.

[42] SAA 1 30, 31, 32; SAA 5 92, 144, 145; Adalı 2011: 110–12.

[43] Lanfranchi and Parpola 1990: xix-xx.

[44] For Sargon II's campaign, see Marriott and Radner 2015. Cimmerian–Urartian relations in the immediate aftermath of the Cimmerian victory are not documented but Rusa II's prosperous reign may have included a treaty or arrangement with the Cimmerians settling in parts of Urartu's realm; Erdem and Batmaz 2008: 73–4.

[45] Sagona and Zimansky 2009: 328–30. An inscription of Rusa II records an agreement between the king and a certain Sagastra (rendered in Urartian as *Šá-ga*-DUMU-*tar-a*, DUMU was perhaps read as *áš* or *ʾa*; for the name and text, see Text 412 in Arutjunjan 2001: 330–1). Sagastra, the son of the *Išgigulū* land, is allowed to go to the land of Mana. Mana is the same as the land of Mannaea which once allied with the Scythians under Išpakāya against Esarhaddon (see further below). Rusa II may have thus avoided conflict with the Scythians by dealing with Sagastra; Erdem and Batmaz 2008: 74. Because the connection between the term *Išgigulū* and the Scythian ethnonym remains

Esarhaddon's military operations in Šubria (north of the Assyrian areas in the Upper Tigris region) in 673 BCE.[46] The two powers entered a state of non-aggression. After Rusa II, Urartu began to decline (discussed further below). Central Anatolia had opened up for the Cimmerians when Urartu was unable to stop them in the late-eighth century BCE.

Phrygia and Assyria had entered into good relations by the time of Sargon II.[47] I propose that the Cimmerian victory against Urartu was one of the motivations for this change.[48] An Assyrian oracle query refers to the Kingdom of Mušku (i.e. Phrygia) sometime between 681 and c. 675 BCE.[49] The Phrygian king (his name is not preserved in the text) had allied with Cimmerian forces. At that specific point in time, the Phrygians hosted Cimmerian tribes and perhaps received their services as mercenaries. Eventually, the Cimmerians sacked Gordion (Strabo, *Geography* 1.3.21). The date is unclear.[50] The defeat of the Phrygians at the hands of the Cimmerians must have taken place sometime between the late-eighth and early-seventh centuries BCE.[51] Phrygia was eventually defeated in a way similar to Urartu. The decline of Urartu and Phrygia accelerated the rise of new powers in Anatolia and western Iran.

A prominent new power in Central Anatolia was Gurdî, a king of Tabal, once an Assyrian vassal.[52] Sargon II campaigned against him in 705 BCE but the Assyrian king died in Tabal.[53] By 695 BCE, Sennacherib defeated Gurdî (whose capital is named Urdutu) at Til-Garimmu (Gürün or Elbistan).[54] Gurdî was not captured. Areas of Tabal were lost in the following years.[55] Mugallu of Melid and Iškallu of 'Tabal' dominated the area during the time of Esarhaddon.[56] The Assyrians launched a campaign against

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tenuous (see footnote 4 above), however, Sagastra's relation to the Scythians remains unclear. If valid, it may mean that initially Rusa II may have tacitly supported the Scythians under Išpakāya fighting the Assyrians in Mannaea. Alternatively, the Urartians were engaged with another Transcaucasian polity. I thank Krzysztof Hipp for drawing my attention to this text.

[46] Sagona and Zimansky 2009: 328–9.

[47] SAA 1 1.

[48] The direct impact of Cimmerian activity in Phrygian zones of influence during the time of Sargon II may be posited but at present is not verified in contemporary primary sources.

[49] SAA 4 1.

[50] Berndt-Ersöz 2008: 16–17, 25–6; Kõiv 2007: 157, 163–4, 166.

[51] Note that the archaeological destruction level traditionally dated to the Cimmerian sack of Gordion has now been redated to the late-ninth century BCE; Rose and Darbyshire 2001. For a dissenting view, see Muscarella 2012.

[52] SAA 1 76. For Tabal, see D'Alfonso 2012.

[53] Millard 1994: 48; ABC 1 ii 6 in Grayson 1975: 76.

[54] RINAP 3/1 17 v 2. For the location of Til-garimmu, see Yamada 2006.

[55] Krasova 2010.

[56] SAA 4 1, 2, 3, 5, 7–12 (Mugallu), SAA 4 9-11 (Iškallu); Hawkins 1993a: 38.

Mugallu in 675 BCE.[57] Unable to take Melid, the Assyrians nonetheless stopped the advance of Mugallu beyond Melid. Mugallu's name survives into Assurbanipal's period.

Cybistra (Ḫubušna/u in Assyrian texts), immediately north-west of the Cilician Gates, was critical.[58] The Assyrians wanted to establish tighter control over Cybistra after the reign of the last suzerain king of Tuwana.[59] The Ḫubušnaean lords in Cybistra may have opposed this.[60] Some may have sought Cimmerian support against the Assyrians. Alternatively, the Cimmerians may have invaded the region and the Assyrians had to react to maintain control of Cilicia. The Cimmerians under Teušpa were defeated by the Assyrians at Cybistra on 679 BC.[61] This halted the Cimmerian advance into Assyrian territory in Plain Cilicia during the time of Esarhaddon.

This facilitated, by 677 BCE, the defeat of Sandauarri, king of the cities Kundi and Sissû (in Rough Cilicia?) along with Sidon's rebel king Abdi-Milkūti, at the hands of the Assyrians.[62] Plain Cilicia remained in Assyrian hands but a new ruler in Rough Cilicia, by the name Sandašarme, became independent by the time of Assurbanipal. Median city-states and polities in the Zagros region and western Iran also became harder to control. Most prominent among them was Kaštariti of Karkašši (location unknown) during the time of Esarhaddon.[63]

Sometime between 681 and 676 BCE, anti-Assyrian elements in Mannaea and the Scythian leader Išpakāya entered into an alliance that was in turn defeated by the Assyrians.[64] During the preparation for this Assyrian campaign against Mannaea, the Cimmerians opted to remain neutral.[65] Several oracle queries indicate that both the Scythians and the Cimmerians launched

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[57] ABC 1 iv 10 in Grayson 1975: 83; Starr 1990: lvii-lviii.

[58] Bagg 2007: 108–9; Bryce 2012: 152–3.

[59] Muwaharanis II in the late-eighth century or Masaurhisas in the early-seventh century BCE. More commonly it is believed that Masaurhisas was a vassal of Tuwana in the late-eighth century BCE; Hawkins 2000: 527–8. For Maraurhisas as a king, see Simon 2013: 277–9.

[60] They presumably ruled over settlements in Cybistra. Archaeological surveys have uncovered mounds, flat settlements and settlements on hills, with Neo-Hittite and Phrygian characteristics. There are now fifty-five known settlements after the 2015 survey of the Konya-Ereğli region; Maner 2016: 226. I am grateful to Çiğdem Maner for drawing my attention to the surveys.

[61] Leichty 2011: 18; ABC 14: 12 in Grayson 1975: 125.

[62] ABC 1 iv 3–4; ABC 14 12´; RINAP 4 1 ii 65 – iii 38, RINAP 4 2 i 14 – i 56 in Leichty 2011: 16–17, 28–9; Radner 2011.

[63] Starr 1990: lx-lxi; Diakonoff 2008: 276–82; Medvedskaya 2010: 156–62.

[64] The *terminus ante quem* relies on the eponym Banbâ (676 BC); RINAP 2 vi 44A–45A (manuscript IM 59046); Leichty 2011: 35. It is not clear if Rusa II of Urartu tacitly supported the Scythians (see footnote 45 above).

[65] SAA 10 111; Fales and Lanfranchi 1981.

expeditions in Mannaea, Media and Persia (mentioned as Paršumaš), competing for influence and the acquisition of economic resources, along with the Mannaeans, Urartians and Median city-states.[66]

The changing geopolitical situation in Anatolia and Iran presented the Assyrian Empire with dangers – but not existential threats – during the time of Esarhaddon. The agreement made with Tyre, the rising power in Phoenicia once Sidon was subdued, brought stability in the Levant.[67] Powers such as Mugallu or Kaštariti were never conclusively defeated but neither were they major threats. Esarhaddon considered Egypt his primary military target and in other frontiers sought to avoid the expenditure of military resources by establishing better relations with Mugallu, Elam, Urartu, and Median city-states. To this end, Esarhaddon considered making use of a Scythian offer of alliance. Bartatua, king of Scythia, had asked the hand of an Assyrian princess.[68] An alliance may have emerged upon negotiation or later. Madyes, son of Protothyes/Bartatua, is noted as an Assyrian ally against the Medes by Herodotus (see further below). The Assyrians also invaded Egypt during the last years of Esarhaddon and the early years of Assurbanipal.[69]

The Cimmerians and the Scythians supported local powers, when they deemed this to be in their interest (e.g. Cybistra and Mannaea), but other powers like Gurdî, Mugallu, Sandauarri, Sandašarme or Kaštariti, were acting independently of both.[70] The defeat of Urartu and Phrygia by the Cimmerians and the activities of the Scythians in Iran accelerated the dissemination and adaptation of Eurasian military and equestrian technologies by Near Eastern states large and small. The socketed arrowheads, ultimately of Eurasian origin, the so-called 'Scythian' arrowheads, spread throughout the Near East by the seventh and sixth centuries BCE and were adapted throughout the region.[71] References to items such as 'Cimmerian leather strap' and 'Cimmerian bow' point to trade in products of animal husbandry as well as

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[66] Starr 1990: lviii-lxii. Paršumaš probably refers to Persia during the time of Esarhaddon as it does during the time of Assurbanipal. The King of Paršumaš during the time of the latter was Cyrus I, ancestor of Cyrus II; Levine 1974: 106–12.

[67] SAA 2 5; Peckham 2014: 292.

[68] SAA 4 20.

[69] Kahn 2006.

[70] Sennacherib's texts are silent about the Cimmerians. This is in part due to a lacuna in the Assyrian archives, as the correspondence archive of Sennacherib has not yet been discovered. Esarhaddon's query mentioning Phrygia with the Cimmerians excludes the latter from the forces mentioned on the side of Mugallu; SAA 4 1: 4–6. Kaštariti's forces are listed alongside independent Cimmerian, Mannaean and other forces.

[71] Derin and Muscarella 2001; Ivantchik 2001a: 58–66; Cahill and Kroll 2005.

military technology spreading in Assyria in the early-to-mid seventh century when the Cimmerians flourished in Anatolia and Iran.[72] One may imagine trading posts and settlements of Cimmerian and Scythian communities supplying goods on Assyrian and other Near Eastern and Anatolian frontiers in ways not so dissimilar to agro-pastoralist communities on China's frontiers as elaborated by Skaff in Chapter 2. Perhaps it is an accident of discovery that the Medes are mentioned more in terms of horse trade.[73] A Cimmerian contingent commander by the name of Ubru-Harran served among Assyrian ranks.[74] Mounted cavalry became the main offensive branch of the Assyrian cavalry from the time of Sennacherib onwards.[75] Other powers in Anatolia and Iran no doubt adopted the same mode of cavalry. Cimmerian mercenaries are noted as serving or fighting as allies of Phrygia and Urartu. The Scythians are mentioned in the same capacity in relation to Median warlords.[76] Bands of Scythians served Cyaxares of Media.[77] Several human (funerary?) statues discovered in the Muṣaṣir region (Sidekan/Mdjeser, northern Iraq) compare with statues of Eurasian nomadic art; they probably date to the seventh or sixth century BCE.[78] They may belong to a Eurasian pastoralist community who once served the Assyrians or the Urartians.

Assurbanipal's reign began with the conquest of Egypt. The Assyrian Empire appeared to be in its prime. Events, however, took unexpected turns. An intense period of aridification began around the mid-seventh century BCE.[79] Tugdamme became the most powerful Cimmerian king in Anatolia after a series of military victories. He ruled over a territory from Lydia and Phrygia in the west, to Tabal and Urartu (even threatening Mannaea?), reduced to his vassals, in the east, while launching campaigns up to the shores of Western Anatolia.[80] His meteoric rise, as well as the increasing

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[72] See references in CAD G s.v. *gimirraja*, 75.

[73] E.g. SAA 4 64, 65.

[74] He is only named 'the Cimmerian' and is among the witnesses for a legal transaction; SAA 6 204: r. 8′. Cimmerian mercenaries are mentioned along with other foreign mercenaries in oracle queries; SAA 4 139, 142, 144.

[75] Dezsö 2012: 23.

[76] In Assyrian oracle queries; SAA 4 1 (Phrygia), 18 (Urarṭu), 71 (Uši[…] and his son, in Media). The Cimmerians and the Scythians may have been allies in the formal sense, sending support troops, or the references could be to mercenaries.

[77] Herodotus, *Histories* 1.73–74.

[78] Marf 2016: 190–5. I thank Dlshad Marf for drawing my attention to these statues and for sharing details of his work.

[79] Schneider and Adalı 2014. Note that further research is needed to clarify the specific impact of this aridification as one among several factors under discussion.

[80] Kõiv 2007; Adalı 2011: 119, 120. SAA 4 269 is fragmented. It may refer to Cimmerian troops threatening Mannaea during the time of Aḫšeri or it may equally refer to Cimmerian mercenaries serving Mannaea.

political instability in Anatolia, partially caused by the intense aridification in parts of Anatolia and the Near East, prompted several powers previously hostile to Assyria to seek the support of the Empire. Yakinlu king of Arwad turned to Assurbanipal c. 667 BCE, followed by Mugallu of Tabal and Sandašarme, king of Hilakku in Rough Cilicia, around 662 BCE.[81] King Gyges of Lydia approached the Assyrians for help against the Cimmerians c. 665 BCE. Urartu sent gifts to Assyria c. 643 BCE, but Assurbanipal's royal inscriptions claim that later, Mugallu's successor in Tabal, as well as Urartu, betrayed Assyria and started conspiring with Tugdamme.[82] If true, this is euphemism for the submission of these kingdoms to the Cimmerians. In 657 BCE, an Assyrian astrologer refers to Tugdamme as 'the king of the world' (*šar kiššati*).[83] The Cimmerians sacked Sardis and killed Gyges in the late 650s or early-to-mid 640s BCE.[84] In the case of Mannaea, a certain Aḫšeri was very powerful until the campaign of Assurbanipal in 660–659 BCE.[85] It is likely they (or some of the tribes and regions among them) remained a viable power until the rise of the Medes in the late-seventh and early sixth centuries BCE. The Mannaeans sent forces to support Assyria against Babylonia in 616 BCE.[86] The interaction with Scythian military technology and political elements, though this is conjecture at present, may have been one of the factors behind Mannaean power.

Šamaš-šumu-ukin, brother of Assurbanipal and ruler of Babylonia, rebelled against his brother in 652 BCE. The war raged for four years.[87] The Assyrians won in 648 BCE but were exhausted.[88] A campaign against Elam, which supported the Babylonians, resulted in the sack of Susa in 647 BCE.[89] Elam lost forever its great power status and perhaps as a direct consequence the Persians became more prominent in south-western Iran. The Persians utilized elements of statecraft and military organization derived from the Elamites, the Assyrians and the Medes.[90]

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[81] For the dates of the submitting kings and Gyges, see Grayson 1980.

[82] Hawkins 1993b; Adalı 2011: 119, 120.

[83] The term was reserved for the Assyrian king in royal inscriptions. In the omen literature, however, the term could refer to any powerful foreign king. Akkulanu made use of this fact and he therefore would not displease his royal patron while at the same time being able to refer to the great power achieved by the Cimmerian king, for later he states: '(I swear) by your gods, that Aššur, your god, will take away whatever dominance (*kiššūtum*) the Cimmerians have achieved and [giv]e it to the king, my lord …'; SAA 10 100 13–15; Adalı 2011: 125–6.

[84] Berndt-Ersöz 2008: 7.

[85] Postgate 1987–90.

[86] ABC 3:5; Grayson 1975: 91.

[87] Grayson 1980: 239–40; Frame 1992: 131–90.

[88] Frame 1992: 131.

[89] Potts 1999: 275–85.

[90] Henkelman 2003 discusses the influence of Elam on Persia in particular.

Tugdamme had planned an invasion of Assyrian territory, seeing its exhaustion after the Assyrian and Babylonian war and the subsequent campaigns. He was ultimately prevented by a disease which took his life c. 640 BCE.[91] Strabo states that Tugdamme died in Cilicia.[92] This location concurs with the fact that Tugdamme's successor is named Sandakšatru.[93] The theophoric element of the name, Sanda, is the name of a major Cilician deity. Sandakšatru is comparable with names such as Sandauarri and Sandašarme from Rough Cilicia. This may indicate that some Cimmerians at least gathered around Sandakšatru in (Rough?) Cilicia.

The Assyrians lost credibility when they could not help the Anatolian polities in the period of Cimmerian dominance between the 660s and the 640s BCE. Egypt under Psammetichus I renounced Assyrian overlordship during the 640s along with several other client states such as Lydia.[94] The fate of Urartu after the death of Tugdamme is unclear. Multiple reasons – internal strife, climatic change, invaders – brought about the final destruction of the Urartian dynasty.[95] Such multiplicity of factors needs to be further researched also for other polities in the Near East. Who finally sacked the Urartian cities and when – 640s, 630s or later – also remains unclear.[96] The Cimmerians under Tugdamme, the Scythians under Madyes or the Medes under Cyaxares are possible candidates, but there were other peoples and polities in these regions and not all of them can be traced in the contemporary textual record. Similar multiple factors presumably brought about the end of the Neo-Hittite and Aramaic city-states in Anatolia, states which were either independent or were once vassals of the Cimmerians, Assyrians, Phrygians or Urartians.

The second half of the seventh century BCE witnessed the rise of new local powers, such as the powerful city of Kerkenes (Pteria?) in Yozgat, Central Anatolia, established by settlers who brought with them Phrygian material culture.[97] During the final decade of Assurbanipal's reign Assyria maintained control over Babylonia, as did his successors to some extent and for a limited period of time.[98] This was a period of considerable confusion for the Assyrian Empire for a range of reasons, not all of which can be

[91] Grayson 1980: 232; Adalı 2011: 128–32.
[92] *Geography* 1.5.21.
[93] Alternatively, the name can be read as Sandakkurru; Ivantchik 1993: 120–3.
[94] Grayson 1980: 232; Adalı 2013: 588–91.
[95] Rolle 1977; Kessler 1996; Erdem and Batmaz 2008; Grekyan 2013–14. Note that further research is needed in order to discern the specific impact of climatic factors.
[96] Sagona and Zimansky 2009: 344–5; Medvedskaya 2010.
[97] Summers and Summers 2013: 137. I am grateful to Geoffrey Summers for bibliographical support.
[98] Frame 1992: 191–213.

presented in the space available. Herodotus wrote that the Medes, a western Iranian people, had been the first to break away from Assyrian rule.[99] The Medes and other kingdoms in Anatolia and Iran, once vassals of Assyria, began to break away from the Empire at least by the 630s BCE, if not during the earlier decades.[100]

Centuries of Assyrian intrusion into western Iran had led to the dissemination of ideas and technologies for the formation of polities and states in Media.[101] Urartu's influence should also be factored in this regard. However, it was only after the impact of the Cimmerian and Scythian states in Anatolia and western Iran that the Lydians (see further below), the Medes and the Mannaeans (discussed above) became particularly prominent. Polities in Anatolia and Iran learned from the power of the nomadic states and tried to integrate their new military technology while engaging other influences around them. Leaders such as Phraortes and Cyaxares of Media transformed their kingdom into the dominating force of western Iran by the late-seventh and early-sixth centuries BCE.[102] Only after the experience of Cimmerian and the Scythian invasions did the Medes transform their polity and expand their military capabilities to become powerful enough to sack Assyrian cities.[103] Cyaxares created an army of 'separate divisions', having 'separated from one another the spearmen, the archers and the horsemen; before that time they were all mixed without distinction' (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.103). Reading Herodotus, one may assume that the leaders at Ecbatana assimilated into their military organization features and practices they had learned from both the Scythians and the Assyrians. This unique historical trajectory was to distinguish Cyaxares during the final war against Assyria and in his efforts against Lydia.

The traditions known to Herodotus and later Greek writers seem to assume a period where the Assyrians were reduced to a regional power and other peoples were battling for supremacy in the Near East, c. 625–617 BCE or even earlier.[104] Herodotus writes that Protothyes' son Madyes, as an Assyrian ally, came with a great army and defeated Cyaxares while the latter was besieging the Assyrian capital Nineveh. The Scythians later dominated

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[99] *Histories* 1.96.

[100] Medvedskaya 2010.

[101] Brown 1986.

[102] Whether Kaštariti is the historical person inspiring the ancient Greek references to Phraortes in Median history remains unclear. There are chronological uncertainties; Diakonoff 2008: 276–82; Medvedskaya 2010: 156–62.

[103] Recorded in the Gadd Chronicle; ABC 3 in Grayson 1975: 90–6.

[104] Millard 1975.

parts of the Near East for an alleged twenty-eight (Herodotus) or fifteen years (Justinus, Orosius).[105] To Greek tradition this was a period of injustice, destructive campaigns and heavy tribute taking.[106] Herodotus delimits Scythian rule in Asia by stating they lorded over the *upper parts* of Asia (τῆς ἄνω Ἀσίης).[107] At present there is no independent evidence to confirm or deny the veracity of Madyes' Scythian dominance in the Near East for a period of time in the late-seventh century BCE. It resembles Tugdamme's period of dominance, but could have been more concentrated in western Iran, with expeditions into Anatolia and perhaps even Syria-Palestine. In the end, Herodotus claims that Cyaxares defeated the Scythians and later attacked Assyria. The latter narrative of Cyaxares' war against Assyria corresponds to those events described in the *Gadd Chronicle*.[108] It is problematic trying to ascribe Herodotus' narrative a precise chronology, but the reference to Madyes during the period of Median dominance closer to the time of Assyrian collapse is intriguing. In any case, the limited contemporary documentation for Assurbanipal's two successors indicates that political turmoil and a series of civil wars defined the reigns of Aššur-etel-ilani (c. 627–c. 623 BCE) and Sin-šar-iškun (c. 622–612 BCE).[109] In the 620s, Nabopolassar, a former Assyrian subject, began to gain control of Babylonia and by 616 BCE was able to take the offensive against Assyria. As the war unfolded, an alliance was forged between Nabopolassar and Cyaxares. They sacked Nineveh in 612 BCE and defeated the remnants of the Assyrians and their last king Aššur-uballiṭ II (c. 611–609 BCE) who retreated to Harran and its vicinities in south-eastern Turkey.

After Tugdamme's death and the end of Cimmerian rule, a new formidable power, the kingdom of the Lydians, was formed in Anatolia, while dramatic events unfolded in Eastern Anatolia, Iraq and Iran.[110] The Lydians seem to have adopted Cimmerian military practices along with their adoption of Phrygian political heritage and their development of coinage and new economic initiatives.[111] Lydian horsemen were recognized for their abilities. Herodotus writes: 'they fought on horseback carrying long spears, the men being excellent in horsemanship'.[112] King Alyattes of the Lydians defeated

[105] Justin (2.3.4) and Orosius (1.14) write that the Scythians were hegemons for fifteen years; Kõiv 2007: 154n11; cf. Ivantchik 1999.

[106] *Histories* 1.103–106.

[107] *Histories* 4.1.

[108] ABC 3 in Grayson 1975: 90–6.

[109] Kuhrt 1995: 540–6.

[110] Payne and Wintjes 2016: 31–5.

[111] Kuhrt 1995: 569–71; Berndt-Ersöz 2006.

[112] *Histories*, 1.79.

the Cimmerians and destroyed their power in Anatolia.[113] The Lydians had evidently by this stage attained military capabilities that allowed them to not only oppose the Cimmerian horse-archers, but also to employ similar tactics as the latter people. Kerkenes, destroyed by fire sometime during the first half of the sixth century BCE, exemplifies Anatolian polities which fell as a result of Lydian expansion which followed.[114] The Lydians were stopped by the Medes advancing from the east in the first quarter of the sixth century BCE. Herodotus writes that the two powers fought a war over Central Anatolia between the years 590–585 BCE. If one relies on Herodotus, it was a solar eclipse (often dated to 585 BCE) which marked the end of the war and a resolution of the conflict with the Halys River marking the boundary. This state of affairs lasted until Cyrus II of Persia invaded Lydia.[115]

Conclusion

The Cimmerians and the Scythians proved to be one of the fundamental factors shaping politics and military affairs in the Near East. The events described are complicated and involve several factors other than the impact of the nomadic states. These are sometimes veiled by the paucity of extant historical and archaeological evidence. After the Cimmerians defeated the pre-existing major powers in Anatolia, Urartu and Phrygia, and the Scythians also intervened in Iran, their impact and other factors accelerated the rise of other powers in the Near East. The Assyrians, Urartians and the Phrygians were already struggling to control their frontiers. The whole process led from a club of great powers to a multi-polarization of the ancient Near East. The geopolitical changes eventually resulted in the decline and collapse of the Assyrian Empire and other major powers. The Cimmerians and the Scythians left a mark in Anatolia and western Iran not only through their direct interventions, but also through the dissemination of their military technology which was adopted throughout the Near East. The cases of Tugdamme and possibly Madyes accelerated the process. The Medes and the Lydians (and later the Persians, especially via Elam and the Medes) efficiently adapted the technology and know-how learnt from the Cimmerians and the Scythians as well as from the Assyrians, Elamites, Phrygians and possibly also Urartians, in varying degrees, to transform their kingdoms. They innovated in different aspects of statecraft and economics, becoming

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[113] *Histories* 1.16.
[114] Summers and Summers 2013: 138.
[115] *Histories* 1.74. For a critique of Herodotus' account and the Halys border, see Rollinger 2003.

the leading powers in Anatolia and Iran. These processes need to be studied further.

It is hoped that this study has shown that the Cimmerian and the Scythian nomadic powers were states which integrated into the Near East and brought about irreversible geopolitical changes. The astonishing developments and transformations analysed in this chapter cannot be understood via the paradigm of the contrast between the barbaric nomads and the civilized sedentary peoples, but rather must be viewed as the direct results of the intense interaction between the two sophisticated and powerful nomadic military state structures (Cimmerian and Scythian) and the pre-existing power structures of the Ancient Near East.

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Socio-Institutional Aspects of Eurasian Empires

4 | Honour and Shame in the Roman Republic[*]

FREDERIK JULIAAN VERVAET

Setting the Stage: the Aristocratic Nature of the Roman Polity

As is well known, ancient Rome was very much an androcentric society, where, at least in terms of public law and social custom, all authority resided with a fairly limited number of adult male citizens. It is indeed important to emphasize from the start that all official political and military power resided with a specific number of, rather than all, adult male citizens. As we will see shortly, at the level of individual Roman families, absolute authority rested with the *pater familias*, the oldest living male in any given family. At the level of state affairs, however, most power was concentrated in the hands of the senatorial nobility, a tiny elite consisting of the highest echelons of Rome's landed aristocracy.

Although the Republic's leading magistrates were indeed elected by the exclusively male citizen assemblies, only the truly wealthy had the economic clout to run expensive election campaigns, as the ranking offices were literally termed *honores*, honours, conceived of as a sort of distinct privilege granted by the Roman people. This also meant that those high stations could really only ever by occupied by men who had the equivalent *dignitas*, dignity determined by social status, namely a proportionally small number of Rome's long-standing landed aristocratic families. The Roman republican polity thus arguably was a plutocratic outfit that served the conservative interests of the happy few, the less-than-'one-percenters', to use a more recently coined colloquialism.

Rome's male citizen body directly elected their regular ranking magistrates in annually organized electoral assemblies. Nonetheless, the Roman electoral system was far from democratic. Private citizens (or, for that matter, other magistrates) could only hope to express their opinions in *contiones*, non-electoral/legislative popular assemblies, either collectively or individually, the latter only by invitation from the magistrate that called

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[*] All translations derive from the *Loeb Classical Libraries series*, slightly modified where necessary.

the assembly.[1] The number of venues was equally restricted: while the *comitia centuriata* could only convene on the Campus Martius, for historical reasons, the other formal assemblies had to be called within the one mile periphery around the *pomerium*. An essential feature of the republican polity was that even soldiers *sub sacramento* enjoyed the right of appeal (*ius prouocationis*) within this urban zone, in order to allow them, too, a free vote in all electoral and legislative assemblies.[2] Nonetheless, the democratic process was significantly constrained by a number of other constitutional checks. First, there is the well-known fact that the centuriate organization and voting procedures strongly favoured the wealthy and senior segment of the male citizen body. The tribal assemblies, for their part, gave overwhelming numerical advantage to rural voting districts (thirty-one in total) and local landowning elites, and discriminated against the growing numbers of freedmen, typically enrolled in the urban districts (numbering only four).[3] Second, the priestly Colleges of the Pontiffs and the Augurs continued to hold significant sway over the comitial process under the classical Republic. The Pontiffs controlled the calendar, whilst the Augurs could render null and void the results of any popular vote at different stages by declaring flaws of procedure. Since both religious Colleges were dominated by the inner core of the consular nobility, they acted as conduits of the most ranking and senior elements in the senatorial aristocracy. In a sense, they could easily be defined as the van- and rear guard of the authority of the Senate.[4]

Since Roman magistrates typically went on to command armies and provinces during or, and increasingly, beyond their annual tenure (i.e. in the capacity of pro-magistrates), it follows that the Roman aristocracy also shared control of the armed forces of conscript citizens and allies alike, at least until the civil wars of the outgoing Republic, when oligarchy gave way to monarchy.

In light of this brief conspectus of the nature of the Roman republican polity, Peter Heather's conception of the Roman Empire as a sort of one-party state, run by the Emperor and an imperial elite of wealthy landowners, *mutatis mutandis*, works very well for the Republic, too.[5] The

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[1]   On (the often overlooked importance of) *contiones*, see the works of Pina Polo 1996: 94–150 and 2011: 83–98, and Morstein-Marx 2004, esp. 119 and following.

[2]   See Giovannini 1983: 19–26.

[3]   For further reading on the (different sorts of) Roman popular assemblies (*comitia*), see Gizewski 2003 and Sandberg 2013.

[4]   On the pontifical college, see Van Haeperen 2002; on the Augural College as a powerful conduit of the authority of the Senate, see Linderski 1986: 2151–90; and, esp., Berthelet 2015: 219–34.

[5]   Heather 2005: 131–3.

above observations thus warrant this chapter's distinct focus on Roman aristocratic honour as a socio-institutional historical reality that mattered greatly in terms of shaping the Roman elite's collective mentality and individual behaviour.[6] Although honour, pride and shame loomed large at all levels of Roman (and, for that matter, Mediterranean) social life, this chapter economically centres on three interconnected analyses of key aspects.[7] First, we will scrutinize the concept and workings of honour and shame at the level of the Roman family. The second main component, then, takes the discussion to the level of the Senate, the authoritative body of ranking nobles that dominated Roman politics for centuries under the Republic. Last but not least, we look at how honour, pride and shame impacted the workings of the Roman military at every level, at times altering the very course of Roman history.[8] Since Roman political and military leadership were closely intertwined in the Roman Republic and all independent military command was held by senators, it follows that the final section also extends the discussion in the second.

Honour and Shame in the Roman Family

Before discussing the impact of honour,[9] pride and shame on Roman family life, it is useful to call to mind how Roman social relations were entirely steeped in authoritarian androcracy. As Dionysius of Halicarnassus recounts,

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[6] On Roman aristocratic values, see Rosenstein 2010.

[7] The fascinating subject of Roman honour has produced monographs by Lendon (1997, mostly dedicated to the imperial period), and Barton (2001, taking more of a literary approach and critiqued quite severely by R. Kaster in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2001.09.02: http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2001/2001-09-02.html). On Roman pride and *superbia*, see the insightful studies by Baraz (2008 and 2013). For a micro-study into honour as a cultural driver of conflict at the level of the early imperial African municipal elite, see Kehoe and Vervaet 2015. The Roman concepts of shame and *pudor* are extensively explored in Kaster 2005: 13–65, building on the author's previous work on Roman shame. For an impressive study of Roman *virtus*, including extensive discussions of manliness, courage and *honos*, see McDonnell 2006.

[8] Since Drogula 2015: 1 rightly asserts that the 'history of the Roman Republic is, to a large extent, the history of its military commanders and the campaigns they led', this emphasis on the Roman military is entirely warranted.

[9] I would concisely define Roman honour as the accumulated private and public esteem in which one was held by one's peer community and wider society. Anything that would diminish that measure of esteem could be termed loss of face or disgrace, a process that could eventually result in *infamia*, the socially catastrophic condition of being held in disrepute/dishonour. Compare also the observations made in n. 12 infra.

Romulus [the legendary founding father and first king of Rome] granted to the Roman father absolute power over his son, and this power was valid until the father's death, whether he decided to imprison him, or whip him, to put him in chains and make him work on a farm, or even to kill him. Romulus even allowed the Roman father to sell his son into slavery.[10]

As the Romans were wont to trace back some of their most ancient and quintessential customary laws to the kings, the concept of *patria potestas* stands out as one of the social cornerstones of Roman society.

The ancient sources amply attest to the paramount importance of honour and shame, or loss of face, as pervasive drivers of social interaction, expectation and self-regulation. As Cicero implicitly attests in *De Republica* 5.4, the quest for an honourable reputation and fear of shame significantly compounded the dread of penalties ordained by law.[11] Under these circumstances, it should not surprise that anything that would negatively reflect upon the paternal or male honour would have serious repercussions, especially so if the individuals involved enjoyed considerable public esteem and as such stood to suffer more loss of face.[12] Sons, daughters and spouses consequently had to play by the rules, as any actions with the potential to diminish the honour and dignity of their fathers or husbands could trigger immediate and dire reaction. This was especially true if these transgressions took place in public, in the gaze of the collective citizen body that judged and apportioned the honour attributed to individual members. In 63 BCE, for example, a senator named Aulus Fulvius had his adult son executed because he was involved in the so-called Catilinarian conspiracy, a plot to overthrow the government led by a number of bankrupted renegade aristocrats.[13] By virtue of this preemptive action, a draconian application of *patria potestas* rare enough to have merited mention in the historical record, A. Fulvius wanted to avoid the stain of any public persecution and preserve the good name and fame of his house.

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[10] Compare *Fontes Iuris Romani AnteIustiniani* 1 (ed. S. Ricobono 1941²), 8 (Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 2.26f.).

[11] Compare the pertinent observation of Barton 2001: 18: in Rome, a pre-industrial city without a central peacekeeping force, the 'suppression of the vendetta depended above all on the self-mastery (*decorum*, *disciplina*, *modestia*, *temperantia*) and the sense of honor (*pudor*, *fides*) of the inhabitants, quickened by a fear of losing face and a dizzy horror of disgrace'.

[12] As Lendon 1997: 36, discerningly puts it: 'A man's honor was a public verdict on his qualities and standing'. I unreservedly accept Lendon's compelling argument that one's honour was something granted or removed by public accord.

[13] Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 5.8.5. The bibliography on the Catilinarian conspiracy is extensive and the topic is beyond the scope of this investigation.

Whereas such political honour killings were certainly rare at that time in Roman history, there are indications that women were more likely to suffer the wrath of slighted males. In keeping with behavioural expectations that prevailed amongst many contemporary Mediterranean cultures, Roman citizen women were always expected to dress modestly and refrain from any non-authorized or extramarital liaisons so as not to offend society and, in particular, the honour of their male relatives. Conversely, Roman men were expected to respect one another's honour and pride. At the level of Roman familial and social relations, this meant they had to steer clear from any inappropriate liaisons with the wives or daughters of fellow citizens, as well as to abstain altogether from homosexual engagements involving citizens.[14] A few notable incidents may serve to illustrate these points.

Around the middle of the first century BCE, Pontius Aufidianus, a Roman *eques*, found that his daughter's virginity had been betrayed by her slave tutor. He killed not only the slave, but also his daughter, as he preferred an untimely funeral over a disgraceful marriage.[15] Much earlier, another distinguished Roman citizen, Egnatius Mecennius, reportedly clubbed his wife to death because she had drunk wine. Valerius Maximus emphatically records that none objected to his action as all agreed that this severe penalty set an excellent precedent since the use of wine by women was widely believed to cause them to lose restraint.[16] In another attested incident, C. Sulpicius Gallus, who held the consulship in 166 BCE, divorced his wife because he learned that she had ventured out with head uncovered. He is recorded to have said the following words:

For the law sets a limit for you of my eyes alone to which you may commend your good looks. Assemble the tools of beauty for them, look your best for them, entrust

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[14] For an excellent study on Roman female dress codes and civic morality, see Sebesta 1997. The Augustan legislation on adultery (the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* of 17 BCE), which hardened much existing custom into statute law, provides an instructive example of the imperative to refrain from sexual liaisons with citizen women other than one's spouse – see esp. *Digesta* 48.5. For fine introductions to Roman (homo)sexuality and *stuprum* (sexual offence), see, e.g., Williams 2010, Langlands 2006 and Fantham 1991.

[15] Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 6.1.3.

[16] Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 6.3.9. In my view, Shackleton Bailey (in Vol. II of his 2000 *Loeb Classical Library* edition, p. 39) incorrectly translates the opening sentence of this paragraph, creating the impression that Valerius Maximus believed this draconian punishment to have been a major crime (*magnum scelus*) – in fact, *magno scelere horum* refers to the Publicia and Licinia attested as having been strangled by sentence of their kinsfolk for poisoning their husbands (the latter in 153 BCE: Livy *Periochae* 48 and *Obsequens* 17). Female adultery and wine consumption (as the perceived source of adultery) were capital offences under Rome's oldest customary laws, traditionally ascribed to Romulus: Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 2.25.6f.

yourself to their more trustworthy gaze. Any further sight of you provoked by your needless incitement must stop at once with suspicion and arraignment.[17]

Indeed, in 62 BCE, C. Iulius Caesar (*cos.* 59, the future dictator) even decided to divorce his second wife Pompeia simply because she was rumoured to have had an affair with P. Clodius Pulcher, famously declaring that his wife 'ought not even to be under suspicion'.[18]

As the potential or genuine indiscretions of their women inexorably impacted on their own honour, such stories should not surprise. After all, legend had it that in 509 BCE the monarchy itself was abolished in Rome, and the Republic established, after Sex. Tarquinius, the son of king L. Tarquinius Superbus, had raped Lucretia, the wife of L. Tarquinius Collatinus (*cos.* 509), one of the foremost aristocrats. Lucretia saved her own honour by stabbing herself to death after bitterly bemoaning her injury, after which her humiliated husband rallied his friends to expel the king and set up a Republic along aristocratic and oligarchic lines.[19] Some sixty years later, a similar outrage would again save the day for the Republic, at that time illegally dominated by a board of ten commissioners with plenipotentiary powers. As one of the Decemvirs, Ap. Claudius Crassus (*cos.* 471, 451), persistently sought to abuse his power by ravishing one Verginius' daughter; the latter brought her to the Forum and killed her in plain sight of all, preferring to be the slayer of a chaste daughter rather than the father of a defiled one. The public outcry was such that the ten were forced to step down and annually elected magistrates resumed their responsibilities.[20]

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[17] Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 6.3.10. The term *lex* in this particular context certainly denotes customary law, the behavioural code of conduct as enshrined in ancestral tradition, the *mos maiorum*.

[18] Suetonius *Divus Julius* 6.2 and Plutarch *Life of Caesar* 10.9.

[19] Livy 1.57–60. Interestingly, her exemplary sense of honour and shame twice compelled Lucretia to take dreadful decisions. After being dined and lodged by Lucretia, the prince entered her room late at night and tried to rape her. She first resisted the sexual assault until Sextus threatened to kill both her and a slave, and make it seem that she had been killed when caught in an act of adultery. Rather than leave this legacy of dishonour for her husband, she gave in. As soon as he had left, Lucretia sent urgent messages to her father, Spurius Lucretius, and to her husband, telling them to come to her in haste, as a terrible thing had happened. Her father came with P. Valerius (*cos.* 509) and her husband arrived with L. Iunius Brutus (*cos.* 509). Lucretia tearfully told what had happened and asked each of the men to seek revenge. The men tried to console her, calling her blameless, as force had been used. She, however, preferred death to even a hint of dishonour and, pulling a dagger from her clothes, took her own life. Although this story belongs to the realm of the legendary, it is telling of Roman aristocratic ideals of honour and shame as harboured in the time of Livy.

[20] Livy 3.44–54 (esp. 48). In 6.3.6, Valerius records another example of a legendary honour killing, in this instance from the reign of king Tullus Hostilius (ca. 672-642 BCE). As the hero Horatius returned from his victory over the three Curiatii and the Albans and found his virgin

That the honour of fellow male citizens was likewise off limits is also well attested in the extant source material: Valerius Maximus alone lists an entire string of examples in his chapter *De Pudicitia* ('Of Chastity'). C. Fescenninus, one of the *triumviri capitales*, put one C. Cornelius in chains for having debauched a freeborn youth, though Cornelius had served as a soldier with great bravery and had even four times received the rank of *primus pilus*, chief centurion. He vainly appealed to the tribunes of the *plebs* declaring his readiness to wager that the young man in question had openly practised prostitution and eventually died an inglorious death in prison. As is clear from Valerius' clarification, the honour of society as a whole trumped that of the war hero: 'For the tribunes of the *plebs* thought it wrong that our Republic should strike bargains with brave men for them to buy sweethearts at home with perils abroad'.[21] In a more famous instance, the consul and commander-in-chief C. Marius (*cos.* 107, 104–100, 86) in 104 BCE declared the military tribune C. Lusius, who also happened to be his sister's son, justifiably killed by private C. Plotius, because the tribune had dared to solicit the young man sexually.[22] Quite unsurprisingly, it was also not acceptable for reputable Roman citizens to be passive partners in homosexual engagements with non-citizen males, regardless of their social status. In 81/80, during a stint on the personal staff of M. Minucius Thermus (*pr.* 81), the proconsul of Asia, young Iulius Caesar was allegedly amorously involved with Nicomedes IV, King of Bithynia. Suetonius amply dwells on this allegation and intimates that this was the one 'deep and lasting reproach, which laid him open to insults from each and every quarter'.[23]

sister 'weeping more profusely than became her years for the death of her affianced Curiatus', he instantly killed her with his sword, 'opining that tears given to an over-hasty love smacked of unchastity'. Brought to trial before the People, his father, so we are told, took up the defence of his son.

[21] Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 6.1.10.

[22] Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 6.1.12; see also Cicero *Pro Milone* 9 and Plutarch *Life of Marius* 14.3–5 (with the name Trebonius for the wronged private). In § 6, Plutarch adds that tidings of Marius' verdict boosted his popularity in Rome and contributed to his election to his third consulship.

[23] *Graui tamen et perenni obprobrio et ad omnium conuicia exposito*: Suetonius *Divus Julius* 49; compare also 2. As Caesar celebrated his Gallic triumph in 46, some thirty-five years later, his soldiers reportedly sang: 'All the Gauls did Caesar vanquish, Nicomedes vanquished him; Lo! Now Caesar rides in triumph, victor over all the Gauls, Nicomedes does not triumph, who subdued the conqueror'; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 49.4; compare also Cassius Dio 43.20. According to Cassius Dio(§4), Caesar took all the jests of his soldiers, including even their accusations of tyranny, but was greatly vexed at their abuse concerning his intercourse with Nicomedes and even 'attempted to defend himself, denying the affair upon oath, whereupon he incurred all the more ridicule'.

Honour and Shame in the Roman Senate

Honour and shame likewise loomed large in the Roman Senate, the predominant political institution in the Roman Republic. Significantly, the strong Roman bias towards seniority and aristocratic rank meant that debates and procedure could not be more different from what we are used to in the Western model of liberal democracy, where every elected member at least theoretically enjoys equality within the elective deliberative body. As the learned Varro explained in a little manual he wrote for the relatively young and politically inexperienced Cn. Pompeius Magnus (*cos.* 70, 55 and 52) in 71 BCE, the right to speak on a motion filed by the magistrate presiding over the meeting senate was organized on the basis of a strict hierarchy defined in terms of seniority and honour, i.e. *gradatim* – 'according to grade'. Before the disruptive power struggles that followed the dictatorship of Sulla, the one called upon first invariably was the oldest living consular member of the Senate, i.e. the oldest of those who had already held the consulship. The pecking order of those who followed was equally defined by a mixture of age and rank. This means that in many debates, most senators would not even get to speak their opinions, and simply sided with the most prominent speakers in the event it came to a vote on different motions.[24]

As every individual senator strove to emulate, and, if possible at all, outdo their ancestors by winning more honour and prestige, intangible assets that could be accumulated and represented big political currency, it should not surprise that senatorial interaction was marked by fierce rivalries, both inside and outside the Senate-house. In 21 CE, early in the reign of the conservative emperor Tiberius,[25] the Curia witnessed a bitter senatorial dispute over honour, rank and deference, a seemingly trivial quarrel that escalated into an acrimonious debate and had to be sorted out by none less than the Emperor's own son, Drusus Iulius Caesar (*cos.* 15 and 21). As it happened, Cn. Domitius Corbulo, a senior senator of praetorian rank, complained to the Senate that the young nobleman Lucius Sulla had refused to give up his seat to him at a gladiatorial contest. As Tacitus records with keen interest:

On Corbulo's side were his age, national custom and the partialities of the older senators, whereas such ranking aristocrats as Mamercus Scaurus, Lucius Arruntius and some other connections of Sulla were active on his behalf. There reportedly was a sharp exchange of speeches, with references to the example of the ancestors,

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[24] For debates and voting in the Senate being governed by rank and hierarchy, see (Varro in) Aulus Gellius *The Attic Nights* 14.7.9; Ryan 1998 and Pina Polo 2013.

[25] For Tiberius' conservative sentiments, see, e.g., Suetonius *Life of Tiberius* 30.

who had censured youthful irreverence in grave decrees. Drusus eventually made a calculated speech to ease the tension, and Corbulo was accorded satisfaction by Mamercus, who was both the uncle and stepfather of Sulla and the most fluent orator of his generation.[26]

In this conflict, two legitimate claims to honour and preferential treatment collided, namely, on the one hand, seniority and senatorial rank, and, on the other, lineage and nobility. Ultimately, seniority prevailed, though only after a ferocious exchange of oratorical fire in the Senate. In a more or less contemporary incident, this same Corbulo (or perhaps his homonymous son, the famous general of Claudius and Nero) reduced one of his senatorial colleagues, Cornelius Fidus, to tears by calling him a plucked ostrich. Though pretty harmless at first sight, Corbulo so publicly branded Fidus as an effeminate – and hence submissive – homosexual, a serious allegation and a devastating dual blow to the honour of any self-respecting Roman aristocrat.[27]

Another powerful example of senatorial rivalry, if not outright enmity, over honour and glory can be found in the competition between Q. Fabius Maximus Verrucosus (*cos.* 233, 228, 215, 214 and 209), the famous Cunctator, and M. Claudius Marcellus (*cos.* 222, 215, 214, 210 and 208).[28] Not least because of the exigencies of the Second Punic War (218–201 BCE) in Italy, both men amassed no less than five consulships during their amazing careers, though Fabius successfully forced Marcellus to step down almost immediately after his election to his second consulship in 215, as he had the Augural College fabricate an unfavourable omen at the time of Marcellus' election. Quite unsurprisingly, Fabius himself was elected in Marcellus' place and thus secured the supreme command of the Roman war effort in Italy in the critical year after Rome's disastrous defeat at Cannae.[29] Fabius and Marcellus indeed championed two very different strategies. The

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[26] *Annals* 3.31.3–5.

[27] Seneca *Dialogues and Essays* 2.17.1 – see Cornell 2013: 539–40 (esp. n. 9).

[28] For a superb and comprehensive discussion of the rivalry between Marcellus and Fabius, see McDonnell 2006: 212–40. McDonnell conclusively argues that the hostility between these men can be traced back to Marcellus' decision at Clastidium in 222 BCE to vow a temple to the two deities Honos and Virtus before winning his great cavalry victory over the Gauls. Only eleven years earlier Q. Fabius Maximus had vowed and dedicated his temple to Honos after his victory over the Ligurians. As McDonnell (219) argues, 'Marcellus' vow attempted to usurp a traditional and important cultic and political connection between the Roman cavalry and the Fabii Maximi. This cannot have endeared Marcellus to his older contemporary Fabius Maximus.' Fabius' opposition was such that Marcellus was eventually forced on religious grounds in 208 to build a separate temple to Virtus adjoining that of Honos, and that it was not until 205 that his son posthumously dedicated the temple to Virtus.

[29] On this particularly fascinating incident, see Vervaet 2012: 86–94 and 2014: 153 n. 72.

former, who was at least some ten years the latter's senior, wanted to wear Hannibal down in a war of attrition, whereas the latter wanted to continue the risky strategy of direct confrontation and pitched battles, an aggressive policy that much endeared him to the vast majority of Roman citizens, who had to bear the brunt of the fighting and were eager to see an end to suffering and devastation.[30]

After securing the coveted *corona ciuica* as a young man in the First Punic War (engaging in single combat), Marcellus had already gained 'unsurpassable martial glory'[31] in his first consulship in 222, when he managed to slay a Gallic chieftain in single combat at Clastidium. As such, he earned the extremely rare distinction of dedicating the slain king's armour as *Spolia Opima* ('the kingly spoils') to Jupiter Feretrius ('the Smiter') on the Capitoline Hill, a ceremony that would have constituted the absolute highlight of his first public triumph.[32] In the summer of 211 BCE, Marcellus, who staked his entire career and reputation on military glory and conspicuous distinctions, confidently tried to secure the equally historic honour of what would have been the very first public triumph of the Second Punic War. Indeed, having returned from Sicily, where he had conquered the mighty and impregnable city of Syracuse, Marcellus asked the Senate to grant him the honour of a public triumphal procession into the City of Rome. Much to his surprise and measured annoyance, the Senate rebuffed his request, officially on the grounds that the war in Sicily was not over yet. Instead, they granted him the right to celebrate an ovation, the so-called lesser triumph, authorizing him to enter the City on foot only, and not in the usual triumphal chariot. Marcellus grudgingly accepted this verdict, but proudly staged his own private triumphal procession on the Alban Mount, a sacred location in Rome's Latin periphery.[33] Thanks to Plutarch, however, we know that envious rivalry was the real cause of Marcellus' failure, as many did not welcome the prospect of a second public triumph for Marcellus.[34]

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[30] According to Plutarch *Life of Marcellus* 9.4 and *Life of Fabius Maximus* 19.3, Poseidonius recorded that Fabius was therefore called the shield, and Marcellus the sword (of Rome).

[31] Quoted from McDonnell 2006: 229.

[32] The bibliography on the issue of the *Spolia Opima*, also briefly discussed infra, is extensive. See Flower 2014 for an excellent start to further reading. For Marcellus being awarded with a *corona ciuica* as a young man, see Plutarch *Life of Marcellus* 2.2. This honorific crown was typically granted to those who had preserved the life of a fellow citizen by the awardee's commanding imperator.

[33] Livy 26.21.2-10. On the so-called *triumphus in Monte Albano*, see Brennan 1996; Rosenberger 2009 and Lange 2014.

[34] Plutarch *Life of Marcellus* 22.1.

That Fabius would have been the main instigator of the Senate's refusal to grant Marcellus this rather well deserved honour may be deduced from what followed some two years later. Indeed, in 209 BCE, Fabius asked for, and received, the right to celebrate a full public triumph on account his capture of Tarentum. Just like Syracuse, Tarentum was a formerly allied Greek city located in Italy's southern periphery that had gone over to the Carthaginians in the early stages of the Hannibalic War. And just as the capture of Syracuse had not terminated the war in Sicily, the capture of Tarentum did not push Hannibal's forces out of southern Italy. In all probability, Fabius managed to convince the Senate that his victory nonetheless represented a decisive turning point in the war, an argument they apparently had no difficulty in accepting.[35] Fabius, whose political clout continued to outclass that of Marcellus, had thus managed to snatch the glory his rival had so eagerly sought in 211, as he, and not Marcellus, was honoured with the first full public triumph of the war. And as Fabius had already celebrated a full triumph in 233 BCE, he could now also proudly outshine Marcellus in that, unlike the bold captor of the *Spolia Opima*, he had been able to secure no less than two curule triumphs.[36]

He arguably even managed to outclass Marcellus' civic crown and rival his *Spolia Opima* when he received the *corona graminea,* the grass crown. Though made of green grass instead of some precious metal, this military decoration was the most distinguished of all Roman honorific crowns and the only one to be bestowed by vote of the whole army to him who had rescued it. In 203, shortly before his death, Fabius was awarded this highly prestigious distinction when Hannibal was finally driven from Italy. Normally conferred by entire armies (or significant bodies of soldiers) to the commander who had saved them from certain destruction, he uniquely received it by unanimous vote of Senate and People as well as by the whole of Italy (*a tota Italia*) 'because he had freed both the city of Rome and Italy from hostile siege'.[37]

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[35] Plutarch *Life of Fabius Maximus* 23.1.

[36] For a more detailed and fully referenced discussion of this triumphal rivalry, see Dart and Vervaet 2014. McDonnell 2006: 224–8 offers another insightful discussion of the political circumstances surrounding the Senate's triumphal decision-making following the captures of Syracuse and Tarentum and rightly emphasizes that Fabius had a major hand in ensuring the outcomes but misses the key point of Fabius winning the race for the first triumph of the Hannibalic War. Most interestingly, Livy entirely omits any mention of Fabius' second triumph even though it occasioned the very first such celebration in this titanic struggle and Fabius Maximus happened to be one of the Emperor Augustus' favourite military strategists: Appian *War against Hannibal* 13. Augustus' keen interest in Livy's *History* is most blatantly on record in Livy 4.20.

[37] Pliny *Natural History* 22.6-10 (esp. 10) and Aulus Gellius *The Attic Nights* 5.6.10.

Honour and Shame in the Roman Military

This intense triumphal rivalry between Marcellus and Fabius, then, leads us to the final aspect of this introductory survey of the role of honour, pride and shame in the Roman Republic, viz. the paramount social sphere of the formidable Roman military.[38] A striking sample of outsider appraisal of the pervasive importance attached to honour and military distinction by Roman soldiery can be found in Polybius' discerning and extraordinarily influential digression on the Roman republican constitution.[39] After having described the key features of the Roman military system, Polybius in 6.39.1–11 dwells on how the Romans motivated their men to deliver. The passage is so insightful that it is well worth quoting in full:

They also have an admirable method of encouraging the young soldiers to face danger. After a battle in which some of them have distinguished themselves, the commander calls an assembly of the troops, and bringing forward those whom he considers to have displayed conspicuous valour, first of all speaks in laudatory terms of the courageous deeds of each and of anything else in their previous conduct which deserves commendation, and afterwards distributes the following rewards. To the man who has wounded an enemy, a spear; to him who has slain and stripped an enemy, a cup if he be in the infantry and horse trappings if in the cavalry, although the gift here was originally only a spear. These gifts are not made to men who have wounded or stripped an enemy in a regular battle or at the storming of a city, but to those who during skirmishes or in similar circumstances, where there is no necessity for engaging in single combat, have voluntarily and deliberately thrown themselves into the danger. To the first man to mount the wall at the assault on a city, he gives a crown of gold. So also those who have shielded and saved any of the citizens or allies receive honorary gifts from the consul, and the men they saved crown their preservers, if not under their own free will under compulsion from the tribunes who judge the case. The man thus preserved also

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[38]   For a compelling discussion of honour and shame in the Roman imperial army, see Lendon 1997: 237–66; compare also Phang 2008: 95–108 and 140–3. As Lendon 1997: 239 puts it, the 'army was a starkly separate community, a separate community of opinion, with its own standards of conduct, a community in which the esteem and disapproval of fellow members was a tremendously powerful force. In battle, soldiers fight harder where their comrades can see them, where "nothing done well or shamefully could be concealed, and lust for praise and fear of disgrace drove both sides on to bravery"[quoted from Caesar *Gallic Wars* 7.80].' Significantly, soldiers' epitaphs regularly name the Emperor who gave a decoration: Lendon 1997 : 260. Since the same applies to the army of the Republic it should not surprise that the levers of honour, shame and disgrace were all the more powerful at this level.

[39]   For the lasting political legacy of Polybius' appraisal of the Roman republican polity, see, e.g., Sellers 2004.

reverences his preserver as a father all through his life, and must treat him in every way like a parent. By such incentives they excite to emulation and rivalry in the field not only the men who are present and listen to their words, but those who remain at home also. For the recipients of such gifts, quite apart from becoming famous in the army and famous too immediately at their homes, are especially distinguished in religious processions after their return, as no one is allowed to wear decorations except those on whom these honours for bravery have been conferred by the consul; and in their houses they display the spoils they won in the most conspicuous places, looking upon them as tokens and evidences of their valour. Considering all this attention given to the matter of punishments and rewards in the army and the importance attached to both, no wonder that the wars in which the Romans engage end so successfully and brilliantly.[40]

Conversely, Polybius also notes (in 6.37.10–13) that fear of being accused of unmanly or disgraceful behaviour compelled men to remain at their posts even when they were overwhelmingly outnumbered, and that those who lost any weapon on the battlefield would often 'throw themselves in the midst of the enemy, hoping either to recover the lost object or to escape by death from inevitable disgrace and the taunts of their relations'. That Roman commanders indeed were acutely aware that honour, pride and shame were incredibly powerful drivers of behaviour in the Roman military easily explains why they regularly resorted to public shaming as a form of punishment more effective than corporal punishment.[41] In 133 BCE, the consul L. Calpurnius Piso ordered L. Titius, one of his cavalry prefects who had given way to fugitive slaves, to

stand on duty at headquarters throughout the period of his service from daybreaks to nightfall, barefoot and dressed in a gown from which the fringes had been cut off and an ungirt tunic. He also forbade him human society and the use of baths, and

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[40]   The equally famous speech of Spurius Ligustinus of 171 BCE, recorded in Livy 42.34, confirms the importance attached to military honours and awards (esp. 42.34.11). That the Italian allies serving with the Romans, too, took these awards with deadly seriousness is recorded in Livy 26.48.3–14. Here we are told that in 210 BCE the legionaries and allied marines (*socii nauales*) campaigning in Hispania almost came to blows over the disputed award of a *corona muralis*, typically awarded to the first soldier to mount the wall of a hostile town (compare also Aulus Gellius *The Attic Nights* 5.6.16). After an arbitration process at the highest level, Scipio Africanus (*cos.* 205, 194) eventually awarded two men from both army corps with the coveted distinction.

[41]   For a brief but insightful discussion of Roman shaming punishments, see Phang 2008: 140–3. On p. 143, Phang explains that 'these forms of punishment assumed that soldiers were internally motivated by honor and shame, by the esteem of their peers and superiors. Fear of being regarded as cowardly motivated soldiers to display *virtus* [i.e. manliness] in combat. In the Principate, however, shaming ceremonies were often replaced with formal demotion or dishonorable discharge.'

deprived the squadrons of horse whom he had commanded of their mounts and transferred them to the units of slingers.[42]

As Suetonius records in *Divus Augustus* 24.2, Octavianus/Augustus also applied public shaming in order to maintain the discipline of the troops, if need be on a massive scale:

He dismissed the entire tenth legion in disgrace, because they were insubordinate, and others, too, that demanded their discharge in an insolent fashion, he disbanded without the rewards which would have been due for faithful service. If any cohorts gave way in battle, he decimated them, and fed the rest on barley. When centurions left their posts, he punished them with death, just as he did the rank and file; for faults of other kinds he imposed various ignominious penalties, such as ordering to stand all day long before the general's tent, sometimes in their tunics without their sword-belts, or again holding ten-foot poles or even a clod of earth.

These punishments were in perfect keeping with customary practice. Under the Republic, cowardly soldiers not punished through summary execution or decimation would be forced to tent outside the ramparts and ditch, and to eat barley rations instead of wheat.[43]

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[42] Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 2.7.9, also on record in Frontinus *Strategemata* 4.1.26. Both Valerius Maximus (2.7.1–15f.) and Frontinus (4.1.1–46) produce many more striking examples of public shaming in their lists of anecdotes documenting Roman military discipline. To quote only two more examples: Sulla ordered a cohort and its centurions whose defences had been breached to stand continuously at headquarters, wearing helmets and without uniforms: Frontinus *Strategemata* 4.1.27. While campaigning in Armenia around 60 CE, Cn. Domitius Corbulo (*suff.* 39) inflicted the following punishment on Aemilius Rufus, a cavalry prefect who gave way to the enemy: he ordered his lictors to strip his clothes and then made him stand at headquarters *foedato habitu* ('in a shameful bodily condition') until released: Frontinus *Strategemata* 4.1.28. As Phang 2008: 140–2 explains, public nudity was mostly disgraceful for citizens (except in certain circumstances such as the public baths). Various degrees of public nudity in the military were all the more degrading and shameful because 'their ideal habitus was more upstanding and honorable' (140). Moreover, unbelted tunics would fall down around the lower legs like a woman's dress or effeminate male's tunic, adding insult to injury. Phang quotes the illuminating example of L. Licinius Lucullus (*cos.* 74), who made his cowardly soldiers dig a twelve-foot trench in their unbelted tunics as the others stood and watched: Plutarch *Life of Lucullus* 15.7.

[43] See, e.g., Livy 10.4.4; Polybius 6.38 and Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 2.7.15b. Compare Phang 2008: 142: 'The mid-Republic had a tradition of expelling cowardly troops from the camp, forcing them to tent outside the ramparts and ditch, in hostile territory, and consume barley instead of wheat rations. This shaming punishment was an alternative to decimation, in which the survivors camped outside the fort and consumed barley rations. Barley rations were punitive not because barley was inedible or tasted bad, for the archaic and classical Greeks used barley as their staple grain, but because the Romans preferred wheat. Wheat was symbolic of humanity in the Roman food system. Barley was not even slave rations, but animal fodder.'

The potentially incredibly effective and destructive character of honour and shame is, however, perhaps best told through a series of striking incidents. In a particularly interesting passage in Plutarch's *Life of Marius* (15f.), we are treated with a rare insight into how C. Marius psychologically prepared his forces to face the formidable tribal alliances around the Germanic Teutones and Ambrones. Often joining forces with the Cimbri, these populous and warlike tribes had inflicted a series of crushing defeats upon the Romans in 113, 109/108 and, especially, October 105 BCE, when some 80,000 Roman legionaries and allied forces and some 40,000 camp followers were destroyed in two consecutive engagements at Arausio in what is now southern France.[44] After learning that he had been assigned with the command against them, the Teutones and Ambrones swiftly marched against C. Marius, and, as explained by Plutarch, took on the role of fearless and fearsome challengers: 'Their numbers were limitless, they were hideous in their aspect, and their speech and cries were unlike those of other peoples. They covered a large part of the plain, and after pitching their camp challenged Marius to battle.'

In a remarkable display of cool-headedness, Marius simply ignored them and kept his army inside their fortifications. As Plutarch's subsequent narrative suggests, he did so as he had to exploit the sense of honour of both his officers and the rank and file, albeit in radically different ways. Privately, he bitterly rebuked those of his 'officers and equals' who wanted to show off their courage and give battle without further ado, going as far as to call them 'traitors to their country'. 'For it was not', he reportedly said, 'triumphs or trophies that should now be the object of their ambition, but how they might ward off so great a cloud and thunder-bolt of war and secure the safety of Italy'. While he had to rein in the foolhardy sense of pride and lust for glory amongst his top brass, the prevailing sentiment amongst his privates was quite the opposite. Indeed, they seem to have been cowering, filled with a deep fear of the unknown. In order to restore confidence and morale amongst his men, as well as to manipulate their collective sense of shame and honour, Marius cleverly adopted the following strategy. Still according to Plutarch,

he would station his soldiers on the fortifications by detachments, bidding them to observe the enemy, and in this way accustomed them not to fear their shape or

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[44] On the defeats of 113 and 109 (or perhaps 108) BCE, see Broughton *MRR* 1: 535 and 545. On the staggering casualty rate at Arausio, see Livy *Periochae* 67; the numbers are quoted from the work of Valerius Antias. Granius Licinianus 33 (ed. Flemisch 1904: 12), records that according to Rutilius Rufus (*cos*. 105) at least 70,000 regular and light-armed troops perished on that fateful 6 October 105.

dread their cries, which were altogether strange and ferocious, and to make them-selves acquainted with their equipment and movements, thus in the course of time rendering what was only apparently formidable familiar to their minds from obser-vation. For he considered that their novelty falsely imparts to terrifying objects many qualities which they do not possess, but that with familiarity even those things which are really dreadful lose their power to affright. And so in the case of his soldiers, not only did the daily sight of the enemy lessen somewhat their amazement at them, but also, when they heard the threats and the intolerable boasting of the barbarians, their anger rose and warmed and set on fire their spirits; for the enemy were ravaging and plundering all the country round, and besides, often attacked the Roman for-tifications with great temerity and shamelessness, so that indignant speeches of his soldiers reached the ears of Marius. 'What cowardice, pray, has Marius discovered in us that he keeps out of battle like women under lock and key? Come, let us act like freemen and ask him if he is waiting for other soldiers to fight in defence of Italy, and will use us as workmen all the time, whenever there is need of digging ditches and clearing out mud and diverting a river or two. For it was to this end, as it would seem, that he exercised us in those many toils, and these are the achievements of his con-sulships which he will exhibit to his fellow citizens on his return to Rome. Or does he fear the fate of [the consul Cn. Papirius] Carbo and [the proconsul Q. Servilius] Caepio, whom the enemy defeated [in 113 and 105 successively]? But they were far behind Marius in reputation and excellence, and led an army that was far inferior to his. Surely it is better to do something, even if we perish as they did, rather than to sit here and enjoy the spectacle of our allies being plundered'.[45]

By virtue of this dual strategy, Marius managed to set the stage for two brilliant victories over the numerically vastly superior Teutones and Ambrones near Aquae Sextiae in 102 BCE.[46] First, he shamed his reck-less and ambitious officers and senatorial peers into accepting his strategy of calculating delay. Second, he allowed his frightened infantry to grow accustomed to their dreadful and seemingly invincible opponents.[47] Most importantly, he also ensured their sense of honour and pride began to hurt in the face of the enemy's defiant boasting and unpunished predations. As a result, their fears eventually gave way to a determined will to demonstrate their superior military prowess.[48]

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[45] These events took place during period 104-102 BCE: Broughton MRR 1: 558 and 562.

[46] Broughton MRR 1: 567.

[47] See Broughton MRR 1: 567 for the fact that the consul Q. Lutatius Catulus, who held command in Italy against the Cimbri, was forced to retreat beyond the Po from fortified positions on the Adige either because of defeat in a preliminary skirmish or the fears of his soldiers. The rather less glorious contemporary developments on the Italian theatre of war confirm that the fear factor loomed large in the aftermath of Arausio.

[48] In fact, the carnage at Aquae Sextiae was such that it appears to have been commemorated in the former place name Pourrières, said to be a corruption of *Campi Putridi* or 'rotten fields'.

Roughly thirty years later, in 58 BCE, Iulius Caesar and his legions faced an equally dreadful and supposedly invincible coalition of Germanic tribesmen under Ariovistus who had occupied large swaths of central Gaul. As Caesar moved to confront the Germans, reports came in from both Gauls and Roman traders who asserted that the Germans were men of huge stature, of incredible valour and practice in arms, dreadful in their countenance and fierceness of their eyes, which paralysed officers and troops alike with fear. Caesar immediately called for a council and invited the centurions of all the companies, and severely reprimanded them on account of their unjustified qualms about the proven superiority of Roman arms and the ability of their commander-in-chief. Most importantly, as Caesar himself testifies in the first book of his *Commentaries* on the Gallic War (1.39–41), he shamelessly played into the men's sense of pride and shame, ending his speech with the declaration that:

he would therefore instantly set about what he had intended to put off till a more distant day, and would break up his camp the next night, in the fourth watch, that he might ascertain, as soon as possible, whether a sense of honour and duty, or whether fear had more influence with them. But that, if no one else should follow, yet he would go with only the tenth legion, of which he had no misgivings, and it should be his praetorian cohort.

The tenth legion happened to be Caesar's favourite, most valorous and trusted crack force. As Caesar goes on to recount, this calculated insult proved to have a stunning effect:

Upon the delivery of this speech, the minds of all were changed in a surprising manner, and the highest ardour and eagerness for prosecuting the war were engendered; and the tenth legion was the first to return thanks to him, through their military tribunes, for his having expressed this most favourable opinion of them, and assured him that they were quite ready to prosecute the war. Then, the other legions endeavoured, through their military tribunes and the centurions of the principal companies, to excuse themselves to Caesar, [saying] that they had never either doubted or feared, or supposed that the determination of the conduct of the war was theirs and not their general's.

Having accepted their excuse, Caesar marched against Ariovistus and won a rushing and decisive victory.

During his civil war against Pompeius and his allies, honour, pride and shame continued to be critical catalysts of endurance and resolve amongst

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This toponymic evidence further corroborates Plutarch's ghastly testimony in *Life of Marius* 21, where it is (amongst other grisly details) implied that tens of thousands of corpses were left to rot unburied.

his severely strained soldiers.[49] After they suffered a serious reverse against Pompeius at Dyrrachium, Caesar's troops 'out of shame' demanded that they be decimated in the traditional manner. Caesar refused to do this and reluctantly punished a few, demoting the standard bearers. His men imposed harsher tasks on themselves and were keen to confront the enemy in the hope of so wiping out their disgrace.[50] On the way back to Rome after their historic victory at Pharsalia, Caesar's famous Tenth Legion mutinied because he had failed to pay them a donative or give them their discharge. In a brazen show of defiance, Caesar merely declared that he would triumph with other soldiers, addressing his men as 'citizens' (*quirites*) rather than soldiers (*milites*), thus giving them their dishonourable dismissal. His elite legion reportedly begged to be decimated to blot out the shame of this repudiation.[51]

At times, the aristocratic military leadership's sense of honour even generated conflicts which shaped the very course of Roman history. The crushing defeat at Arausio in October 105 BCE was entirely due to a poisonous conflict over honour and pride between the ranking Roman commanders, namely the consul Cn. Mallius Maximus and the proconsul Q. Servilius Caepio (*cos.* 106). As both men had been charged with the conduct of the war against Cimbri and Teutones in Gallia Transalpina, Roman constitutional custom dictated that the supreme command be held by the consul, as the Republic's highest annually elected official, and not the proconsul. As it happened, however, the consul was a new man of plebeian stock, whereas the proconsul was a scion of one of the Republic's noblest patrician families. Despite the consul's repeated entreaties for the proconsul to join their armies, the proud patrician refused to heed the supreme command of someone he felt was socially inferior. As both Cassius Dio and Granius Licinianus record, Servilius was fully aware that Mallius' consulship gave him superior dignity (*dignitas*) and could simply not stomach what he felt would be a humiliating subordination. As a result, both Roman

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[49] The following two examples have been sourced from p. 126 of Phang's excellent 2008 monograph on ideologies of discipline in the late republican and early imperial Roman military, where they feature in an insightful chapter on '*Disciplina* and Punishment'.

[50] Caesar *de Bello Ciuili* 3.74; Appian *Civil Wars* 2.10.63; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 68.3.

[51] Appian *Civil Wars* 2.92–94; Plutarch *Life of Caesar* 51; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 70; Cassius Dio 42.52.1–55.3 and Frontinus *Strategemata* 4.5.2. Caesar instead fined the ringleaders a third of their donative and *praemia*. Phang 2008: 126 observes that 'in keeping with Caesar's reputation for *misericordia* (mercy), the tradition thus seeks to exculpate him from the charge of cruelty (*saevitia*) in inflicting decimation, because his soldiers request it. This tradition also glorifies his soldiers as so well trained that they have internalized the disgrace of insubordination to the extent of begging for decimation. Soldiers internalized the shame of insubordination or cowardice as part of the military *habitus*.'

armies were crushed in separate engagements, in the course of which Mallius lost his two sons and one of his senatorial legates. Italy and Rome were fortunate that another new man, namely C. Marius, would eventually save the day and that he and the much nobler proconsul Q. Lutatius Catulus in 101 did manage an exemplary cooperation.[52]

The fateful battle at Pharsalia of 9 August (7 June, Julian calendar) 48 BCE offers another, even more compelling example of how honour and pride could alter the course of history.[53] After his near-catastrophic defeat at Dyrrachium, Caesar and his men found themselves in a precarious position.[54] First and foremost, Pompeius' powerful navies controlled the seas. This had not only prevented Caesar from transporting about half his army to Greece, where they were consequently greatly outnumbered by Pompeius' vast forces, but also gravely impaired his provisioning. Both Caesar and Pompeius knew perfectly well that the former was thus running out of time, and that his only hope was to stake all on a quick and decisive battle.[55] Pompeius, however, suffered one formidable disadvantage. As Appian records in *Civil Wars* 2.67, he 'was surrounded by a great number of senators *of equal honour* with himself, by very distinguished *equites*, and by many kings and chieftains'.[56] Unlike Caesar, he thus had to reckon

[52] For a full discussion, see Vervaet 2014: 157–62. In a marked display of modesty and deference, Marius refused to celebrate the triumph voted him because of Aquae Sextiae and instead celebrated a single triumph along with Catulus for his two victories. Inspired by the feats of the great Claudius Marcellus, Marius also vowed (and built) a temple to *Honos* and *Virtus*: Broughton MRR 1: 571 and, esp., McDonnell 2006: 267–81.

[53] For the date of the battle of Pharsalia, see Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Italiae* 13.2: 190–1 (*Fasti Amiternini*) and 208 (*Fasti Antiates*).

[54] In point of fact, it is no exaggeration to state that the consequential conflict between Caesar and Pompeius, once close political allies, to a significant extent amounted to a conflict about honour, dignity and pre-eminence. Lucan's famous statement in *Pharsalia* 1.125f. that Caesar could not tolerate anyone before him and Pompeius could brook no equal (*nec quemquam iam ferre potest Caesarue priorem / Pompeiusue parem*), was probably inspired by Caesar *de Bello Ciuili* 1.4 (*neminem dignitate secum exaequari uolebat*) and is echoed in Florus 2.13.14. In 46 BCE, Cicero, for his part, argued before Caesar that both men's dignity was 'nearly' equal (*Pro Ligario* 19: *principium dignitas erat paene par*), an understandably cautious appraisal made after Pompeius' defeat. In this respect, it is also well worth pointing to *BC* 1.7, where Caesar reminds his soldiers on the eve of the civil war that he had always defended and promoted Pompeius' honour and dignity (*honori et dignitati*), urging them to defend the reputation and honour (*existimationem dignitatemque*) of their commander (which they successfully did, according to Cicero in *Pro Ligario* 18), and 1.85, where he complains that, contrary to precedent, his enemies had wanted to deny him the opportunity to return from his victorious campaigns in Gaul 'either with some honor or at any rate without ignominy' – *aut cum honore aliquo aut certe sine ignominia*.

[55] Cf. infra.

[56] πολὺ δ᾽ ἀμφ᾽ αὐτὸν πλῆθος ἀνδρῶν ἀπό τε τῆς βουλῆς ὁμοτίμων οἳ καὶ τῶν καλουμένων ἱππέων οἱ διαφανέστατοι βασιλέες τε πολλοὶ καὶ δυνάσται – my italics in the translation.

with the honour of a great many aristocratic peers, several of whom could boast a far more illustrious lineage and likewise held the rank of consular proconsul. They therefore deeply resented their temporary subordination to Pompeius' supreme command.[57] Indeed, Appian (loc. cit.) goes on to recount that, after the victory at Dyrrachium, these ranking senators 'accused him of being fond of power and of delaying purposely in order to prolong his authority over so many men *of equal honour* and for this reason called him derisively "king of kings" and "Agamemnon", because he also ruled over kings while the war [against Troy] lasted'.[58]

In *Life of Pompeius* 67.2f., Plutarch produces a similar summary of the severe criticism of Pompeius' strategy to avoid battle and instead wear Caesar's army down. Pompeius was accused of unduly prolonging the war 'in order that he might always be in office and never cease to have for his attendants and guards men who claimed to rule the world'. Thanks to Plutarch, we also know that it was L. Domitius Ahenobarbus (*cos.* 54) who nicknamed Pompeius 'Agamemnon' and 'King of Kings', and that even some of Pompeius' staunchest partisans like L. Afranius (*cos.* 60) openly questioned the supreme commander's strategy of delay. In *Caes.* 41.1, Plutarch similarly recounts that, with the notable exception of M. Porcius Cato (*pr.* 54), all the rest reviled Pompeius for trying to avoid a battle, and sought to goad him on by calling him Agamemnon and King of Kings, implying 'that he did not wish to lay aside his sole authority, but plumed himself on having so many commanders dependent on him and coming constantly to his tent'.[59] In *BC* 3.82, finally, Caesar himself records that in Thessaly, after Scipio's huge forces had reinforced Pompeius' army, many senators put Pompeius through the hoops by questioning his motives as commander-in-chief. Whenever any action on the part of Pompeius showed some degree of slowness and deliberation, 'they declared that it was only a single day's task, but that he was making the most of his supreme command and treating men of consular and praetorian rank as though they were slaves': *unius*

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[57] For Pompeius' official position as supreme commander of the anti-Caesarian forces in 48, see Vervaet 2006.

[58] καὶ τῶν ἐπ᾽ ἀξιώσεως αὐτὸν ἐπιτωθαζόντων ἐς φιλαρχίαν ὡς ἑκόντα βραδύνοντα, ἵν᾽ ἀνδρῶν ὁμοτίμων τοσῶνδε ἄρχοι, καὶ ἐπὶ τῷδε αὐτὸν βασιλέα καὶ Ἀγαμέμνονα καλούντων, ὅτι κἀκεῖνος βασιλέων διὰ τὸν πόλεμον ἦρχεν – the italics in the translation are mine. In *Civil Wars* 2.69, Appian relates that after his fateful concession and amidst the bickering in his camp, Pompeius silently resigned himself to his fate, 'as though he were no longer commander but under command, and as though he were doing everything under compulsion and against his judgment'. Appian also indicates that some of Pompeius' critics feared that even if he would conquer, he would not lay down the supreme command (τὴν μοναρχίαν).

[59] ὡς δὴ μὴ βουλόμενον ἀποθέσθαι τὴν μοναρχίαν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀγαλλόμενον ἡγεμόνων τοσούτων ἐξηρτημένων αὐτοῦ καὶ φοιτώντων ἐπὶ σκηνήν.

esse negotium diei, sed illum delectari imperio et consulares praetoriosque seruorum habere numero.[60]

The remarkable and, for that matter, legally questionable failure on the part of Pompeius' senatorial equals to go along fully and unconditionally with his position of supreme commander significantly contributed to Caesar's victory at Pharsalia, one of the watersheds in Roman history. Appian explains in *Civil Wars* 2.67 that Pompeius, fully aware of Caesar's increasing want of supplies, initially tried to convince those who preferred a quick decision, arguing that Caesar only pushed for battle out of sheer necessity, and that it was better to wait and wear his army out. Pompeius nonetheless allowed himself to be moved from his own purpose and gave in to his senatorial critics. Instead of firmly standing on his dignity and rights as commander-in-chief, Pompeius finally decided to give battle 'against his will, to his own hurt and that of the men who had persuaded him'.[61] As is generally known, Pharsalia paved the way for Caesar's successive dictatorships and the establishment of an autocratic new order at Rome.

Some twenty years later, in 29 BCE, another well-known but poorly understood struggle over honour and privilege would decisively steer the hand of Imperator Caesar Divi filius, as Octavianus then wanted to be known, in shaping an imperial administrative reorganization that would last for roughly three centuries, namely the so-called Augustan settlement of January 27. At some time in the summer of 29, stunning tidings arrived from the proconsul of Macedonia, M. Licinius Crassus (*ord*. 30). During his rather proactive military campaigns in Moesia, Crassus had managed to slay Deldo, king of the powerful Bastarnae, in single combat. Following ancient Roman custom, any Roman soldier who should succeed in killing a hostile chieftain or king with his own hands would be entitled to dedicate his armour as *Spolia Opima* to Jupiter Feretrius on the Capitoline Hill. Dedication of these so-called opulent or kingly spoils arguably represented the most distinguished military honour in the Roman Republic, as tradition had it that only three Romans ever enjoyed this remarkable privilege,

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[60] In this quarrel over honour and precedence, it is also well worth calling to mind that some consular nobles in Pompeius' camp bickered over who was to succeed Caesar as Pontifex Maximus (L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, Q. Caecilius Metellus Pius Scipio Nasica, *cos.* 52, and P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther, *cos.* 57) and that many even sent agents to Rome to hire and take possession of houses suitable for praetors and consuls, assuming that they would immediately hold these offices after the war: Plutarch *Life of Caesar* 42.2; compare Caesar *de Bello Ciuili* 3.82f. and Plutarch *Life of Pompeius* 67.5.

[61] In *Life of Pompeius* 67.4, Plutarch also expresses his strong indignation at the fact that Pompeius as sole commander of a formidable coalition meekly succumbed to his critics, behaviour which he deems unworthy of even the captain of a ship.

viz. Romulus himself, one Cornelius Cossus in 437 BCE and, last but not least, M. Claudius Marcellus in 222 BCE. Caesar Octavianus, who would stage his own triple triumph from 13 to 15 August 29, a celebration that also included his pompous Actian triumph, could not therefore possibly allow someone else to steal his thunder by virtue of an honour that eclipsed even that of the grandest of public triumphs. This issue was significantly compounded by the fact that that potential rival happened to be none other than M. Crassus, the homonymous grandson of the victor over Spartacus and as such a scion of one of the aristocracy's noblest families. In a masterly but politically fraught manoeuvre, Octavianus first neutralized Crassus' claim to immortal honour by invoking a learned Varronian doctrine that only those *Spolia Opima* captured by a Roman supreme commander could be dedicated to Jupiter Feretrius, a doctrine that supposedly went all the way back to a regal law posited by King Numa, the founding father of Roman religion. Since Crassus had pulled off his single combat victory under the *imperium* and auspices of the triumvir Caesar Octavianus, he thus conveniently failed to qualify for the honour of dedicating the *Spolia Opima* to Jupiter Feretrius. In order to align the historical record with his new doctrine, Octavianus even took the pains of forging evidence that Cornelius Cossus had won and dedicated the *Spolia Opima* as consul in 428 BCE, and not as a military tribune under the command and auspices of the dictator Mamercus Aemilius Mamercinus in 437.

Most importantly, however, this seemingly trivial jockeying over honour, privilege and distinction also had tremendous long-term consequences as it strengthened Octavianus' resolve to retain the universal supreme command (and the prevailing auspices) and to convert the public triumph into the strict monopoly of the imperial house. The first aspect of this dual strategy he achieved in the carefully orchestrated settlements of 13 and 16 January 27, by virtue of the votes by Senate and People that swiftly followed his theatrical abdication the triumvirate *rei publicae constituendae*, a plenipotentiary magistracy he could not hope to continue indefinitely. On the one hand, he secured direct control over the majority of the militarized provinces, henceforth termed the *prouinciae Caesaris* and governed at his discretion by his own appointees, the *legati Augusti pro praetore*. As these men lacked auspices of their own, Caesar Augustus could automatically take all credit for any of their victories. On the other hand, he also studiously retained the supreme command in the public provinces, those provinces legally administered by proconsuls appointed by the Senate under the terms of the *lex Iulia de iure magistratuum*. Since some of these would continue to harbour significant armies for the next couple of decades, this empowerment to hold

the s*ummum imperium auspiciumque in alienis prouinciis* would enable him to control these forces, too, and claim any triumphal honours on account of successes won by individual proconsuls in the field. This constitutional reorganization of the Empire subsequently allowed him to convert the public triumph from a republican aristocratic ritual into a strictly observed imperial monopoly, a goal he had fully accomplished around 10 BCE. From now on, the Roman public triumph was only to be celebrated sparingly, and only ever by Emperors and their sons. By denying the Republic's highest regular military honour to the senatorial aristocracy, Augustus and his successors hoped significantly to reduce the chances of any possible rivals garnering enough prestige and popularity to usurp imperial power.[62]

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[62] These last two paragraphs outline some preliminary results from my forthcoming study on 'Augustus and the Public Triumph: from Republican Ritual to Imperial Monopoly'. For full discussions of Octavianus/Augustus' constitutional position as triumvir *r.p.c.* (43–27 BCE) and from January 27 BCE, see Vervaet 2010 and 2014: 239–92. For the Republican customary law that the holder of the *summum imperium auspiciumque* (i.e. the supreme commander) could take credit for any victory won under his auspices, see Vervaet 2014, 68–130 (esp. 93 and following).

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5 | Honour and Shame in Han China

MARK LEWIS

Introductory Remarks

Honour and shame form a single complex, the latter being the negative emotional response to what damages the former. Together they define a society's ideal human type. While many modern philosophers condemn shame as a 'negative' emotion that threatens mutual respect, most pre-modern people endorsed shame as essential to maintaining order, and shaping correct people. Honour defined the ideal human, and shame marked the failure to match that ideal. One can thus trace the evolution of the idea and practice of the state in early China or elsewhere through studying evolving ideas about the honour/shame complex.[1]

The Redefinition of Shame in the Warring States

The earliest Chinese source that cites shame to explain group solidarity and proper conduct is the *Tradition of Zuo*, which dates to the mid- or late fourth century BCE. This was the middle of the Warring States era, when a new model of state became the predominant political form and produced new types of political actors. In the preceding period, the so-called Spring-and-Autumn era, the political realm had been divided into numerous city-states inhabited by a warrior aristocracy whose leaders surpassed in real power their titular sovereign, the Zhou king. Wars between the states were routine, frequent and small in scale. They were justified as necessary to defend or extend the honour of the elite lineages, and of the warriors who formed them. While the *Tradition of Zuo* reflects changes in the Warring States era, it also preserves the values of this earlier warrior elite.[2] Appeals to honour

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[1]   On honour/shame in classical antiquity, see Cairns 1993; Williams 1993, ch. 4; Lendon 1997; Tarnopolsky 2010; Roisman 2005, ch. 3, 8; Konstan 2006, ch. 4; Barton 2001, Part 3; Kaster 2005, ch. 1–2, 4; McDonnell 2006, ch. 5, 8. On early China, see Rappe 2009, which examines only a couple of philosophers. On shame as a definer of status, see Neckel 1991.

[2]   Lewis 1990, ch. 1. On warfare and honor, see 36–43. On the centrality of honour to the evolving forms of warfare in the ancient Mediterranean, see Lendon 2006; Barton 2001: 75–90, 126–7, 142–3, 167–8; Robinson 2006, ch. 1–3.

and shame usually dealt with warfare, in which the fear of being shamed was the foundation of martial heroism. One gained honour by conquering in battle, and lost it through defeat.

As the political and social order was reconstructed around absolute rulers with mass armies, new social groupings replaced the vanished noble order. In this process the emotion of shame came to be differently defined, and to play a new role. This is best seen in the groups formed by masters and disciples, usually described as philosophers. The earliest surviving texts from such groups are the *Analects* and the *Mencius*, which took shape shortly after the *Tradition of Zuo*. These texts pioneered innovations in references to shame, in which honour's relation to combat largely disappeared. Instead, the philosophers insisted that the values of a good society lay in their intellectual programmes, so shame was a consequence of failing to carry out those programmes. Shame also ceased to be an exclusive attribute of the higher orders, but instead characterized every person's relation to his or her social role.

The most important innovation in these texts was the idea of a group-based sense of honour/shame that contradicted conventional social values. Whereas texts disagreed as to what were the highest values that would elicit proper shame, they concurred that what elicited shame in ordinary people – poverty or low status – were not shameful for men of discernment, and that what was honoured by ordinary people – power and wealth – was not truly honourable. The accounts of honour/shame thus became a mode of asserting what were the highest values, and of trying to claim those values for one's own group.

This new vision appears in the *Analects*:

The Master said, 'If you lead them with policies and restrain them with punishments, then the people will dodge [violations] but have no shame. If you lead them with virtuous power and restrain them with rituals, then they will have shame and thus spontaneously correct themselves.'[3]

Here and elsewhere shame is learned in ritual performance that allows the actor to internalize moral judgments. Shame and ritual in this context are explicitly set against the legal punishments which conventionally defined the new political order. Other passages make the same and related arguments, notably linking shame to the glib speech that marked the rival philosophers.[4]

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[3] Lun yu, 22.
[4] *Lun yu*, 17, 85, 108, 319.

Another key passage asserted that the contradiction between true honour/shame and conventional values was their respective valuation of material goods:

The Master said, 'A scholar/man of service whose ambitions are set upon the Way but is ashamed of bad clothing or food is not worthy of participating in discussions.'[5]

This idea that the true scholar did not worry about physical comforts, or did not accept the conventional belief that poverty was shameful, was elaborated in stories about Confucius' contempt for physical hardships, praise for the ascetic life of his favourite disciple, and assertions that being successful in a corrupt state was shameful.[6] Here the absence of shame in not sharing the attributes of the successful courtier was embraced as a hallmark of membership in the new form of social grouping constituted through study and moral cultivation. This tension between a true sense of shame and material wealth became central to ideas about honour among early imperial intellectuals.

These discussions of the ability of scholars to endure poverty almost certainly reflect the condition of the so-called 'men of service/scholars [*shi*]' from the middle of the Warring States period. The *shi* emerged from the fusing of the lowest levels of the old aristocracy, aristocrats who had lost their positions and ambitious elements of the common people. These people argued that their ideal mode of earning a living was to hold office, but securing such positions was difficult. While some obtained patronage from rulers, this was also insecure. Thus the emergence of tension between concern with honour and shame, on the one hand, and material wealth, on the other, expressed a central difficulty in making the transition from scholar to bureaucrat that was fundamental to the changing elite of the early empire.[7]

The slightly later *Mencius* made many similar arguments, while adding new ones. It emphasized that it was shameful to enjoy a high position without practicing the Way, and argued that what was truly honourable was treated with contempt by ordinary people, while the conventionally honoured was usually shameful. One anecdote concluded:

As the true gentleman views it, the means by which men seek wealth, nobility, profit, and success that do not leave their wives and concubines ashamed and weeping, are few indeed![8]

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[5] *Lun yu*, ch. 5, 'Li ren', 79.
[6] Lewis 1999a: 228–33; *Lun yu*, 100, 121, 163, 191–2, 247–8, 300; Xin yu, 91.
[7] Xu 1979: 30–4.
[8] Mengzi, 334, 358, 418. See also Xunzi, 331; Zhuangzi, 433.

This text also argued that the ruler's shame was to be patterned on that of scholars, i.e. a shame elicited by moral failings rather than military defeats or reduced status. It furthermore insisted there was no shame in any social position, even that of a slave, so long as it was one's allotted place.[9] This argument, in turn, was based on the most important innovation in the Mencius' theory of honour, the idea that shame was a natural human endowment. This idea was elaborated in the theory of the 'four beginnings' that underpinned the emergence of moral character. One of these was 'the heart of shame and loathing', which underlay all sense of duty and righteousness. Versions of these ideas figured in other texts, and had become conventional by the Han dynasty.[10]

Other late Warring States texts specifically devoted to statecraft, or which emphasized the centrality of warfare, developed a different account of shame. These texts argued that rewards and punishments should instill a sense of honour and shame in the common people that would cause them to obey the ruler, even to die in battle. A sense of honour and shame would likewise motivate good officials to serve their ruler, and force them to dissociate themselves from the corrupt and influential cliques that pervaded the courts. This should even lead officials to reject errors of the ruler if he abandoned proper use of rewards and punishments.[11] This link between punishments and instilling shame was cited as an axiom in a decree by the Han founder, and appears in later accounts of several officials. The *Great Tradition of the Book of Documents* even posited that in the ideal world of high antiquity, the 'symbolic' punishments of the sage Yao had worked entirely by shaming people, without inflicting actual suffering.[12]

However, these thinkers of statecraft also insisted on limits to the usefulness of honour and shame. One argued that the army's ability to defeat the enemy depended upon the strategist's freedom from the constraints of conventional behaviour. The waging of 'total war' not bound by morality likewise needed to escape considerations of honour. For this reason, the moral virtues and literary arts espoused elsewhere were condemned as destructive elements or 'lice'.[13] The ruler also needed to escape the bonds of

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9 *Mengzi*, 38–9, 65–6, 69, 142, 242–4, 292, 509–10.

10 *Mengzi*, 138–9, 446; *Xunzi*, 20, 35, 40, 64–5, 78, 241, 345, 351; *Li ji*, ch. 8, 4b; ch. 9, 23a; ch. 39, 19b; ch. 43, 6b; ch. 49, 20a–b; ch. 54, 9b; *Guanzi*, 12, 338; *Yan tie lun,* 87, 124; *Han shi wai zhuan*, 9, 321; *Zhuangzi*, 195, 198, 286–87, 423, 447; *Da Dai li ji*, 111; *Qian fu lun*, 467; *Zhong lun*, ch. 1, 15a, 20b.

11 *Shang Jun shu*, 174, 175, 276–7, 439–40; *Han Feizi*, 208–9, 345, 499, 821, 940, 997; *Li ji*, ch. 55, 8a-b; *Guanzi*, 1, 7, 8, 12, 66, 77, 78, 127, 194, 335, 338.

12 Han shu 54, 3635; Shi ji, 2782; Hou Han shu, 2502; Shang shu da zhuan, 9.

13 *Shang jun shu*, 88, 439. On the theory of total war, see Lewis 1999b, 638–41. On the ruler's need to change, see Lewis 1994: 38–40, 139–44. On expedient assessment, see *Gongyang*

conventional honour/shame in order to create government institutions that could cope with new political realities. Changes free from moral strictures were also advocated under the rubric of 'expedient assessment' that figured in military treatises and even Confucian commentaries. These texts argued that people, in matters of fundamental importance, had to abandon fixed principles and do what would preserve the state.

Another point where theoreticians of statecraft questioned the importance of honour/shame was the idea that insistence on personal virtue, particularly the contempt for material goods noted above, undercut the efficacy of the ruler's rewards. Like the worry that moral scruples might lead to defeat in war, these arguments insist that personal virtue is not always beneficial to the state. Thus several texts condemned honouring exemplary hermits who rejected worldly glory, even calling for their execution. Arguing that punishments did not bring shame likewise undercut the government's rule.[14]

A final point where theoreticians of statecraft challenged the social value of the philosophers' honour was the idea that the refusal to perform shameful acts could block ambitious men from pursuing government positions. They cited sage ministers who had undergone humiliations or accepted degrading positions in order to become advisers to the ruler. A couple of passages linked this self-abnegation to the fact that all officials were effectively the ruler's slaves, echoing ideas articulated in the early Roman Empire. However, the Han writers, in contrast with the Roman case, treated this as a positive development for society, rather than worrying about the degraded condition of those in the government.[15]

The idea that shameless behaviour to attract attention was admirable is also asserted in an early Han anthology of model persuasions, the *Stratagems of the Warring States*. This praises examples from earlier history – including disfigurement with lacquer, untying one's hair to feign madness, and repeatedly fleeing military defeats – and quotes the maxim, already a cliché, that one should accept a 'small shame' to attain later 'great glory'.[16] However, it is distinctive in continuing the earlier idea that the greatest cause for shame is military defeat, and that only a victory can wipe away this shame.[17] This

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zhuan, ch. 5, Lord Huan year 11, 7b-9a; ch. 8, Lord Zhuang year 19, 2b; ch. 20, Lord Xiang year 19, 11a-b; *Xin yu*, 163; Lewis, 1990: 66, 114–19, 122–5. 128, 130.

[14] *Han Feizi*, 1085.

[15] *Han Feizi*, 222, 247, 298, 310, 497–8, 800–1, 829–30, 918; *Xin yu*, 89; Roller 2001, ch. 4; Xu 1975: 281–94.

[16] *Zhan guo ce*, 185, 186, 397, 410, 456, 456–7, 669, 824, 1088, 1116.

[17] *Zhan guo ce*, 5, 171, 337, 625, 658–9, 930–1, 1064, 1107, 1135. See also *Huainanzi*, 222, 328; *Han ji*, 262, 263.

shows that even while new political thinking shifted the emphasis from military valour and honour to intelligence and morality, the state continued to rely on military success. Even certain texts that emphasized the new ritual and moral values still carried traces of the old military themes.[18]

The links of honour/shame and martiality also endured in the military treatises, but these emphasized the need for shame among the common soldiers, while for the commander this emotion was dangerous. This again exemplifies the tension between a flexible and amoral 'expedient assessment' and a morally inspired sense of shame. Thus the *Master Sun* argues that to the extent that the commander insists on his honour and integrity, and thus is sensitive to feelings of shame, he can be provoked and manipulated.[19] Later military texts concentrated not on the commander but on the troops, and they concur that a strong sense of shame is crucial in motivating men to fight to the death. They also argue that the commander must be willing to die for his own honour and that of the state.[20] To the extent that these texts diverge from earlier ideas, it is in emphasizing that the shame of both the people and the commander makes them loyal to the ruler.

One of the last military treatises, the *Six Quivers*, made a different appeal to the role of shame in getting an army to fight:

Virilocal sons-in-law and criminals who desire to escape their past shame can be gathered into a unit called the 'Fortunate [i.e. 'undeserving'] Employed'.[21]

Here an actually debased and lowly position could be redeemed by serving in the army. Another passage reiterates the danger discussed in the statecraft tradition that men could take pride in their own personal morality, rather than in public service. In such a case, public service could be viewed as potentially shameful, as was argued by the followers of Confucius.[22] As will be discussed below, this idea, that a heroic commitment to personal morality challenged loyalty to the ruler, became fundamental in the Eastern Han, but it was advocated as a positive good.

In all these ways, the single form of honour/shame defined by violent competition among the warrior nobility was dispersed in the new forms of violence found in the ruler-centred state with its universal military service: concern for honour as a weakness in the commander's psychology,

[18] *Li ji*, ch. 52, 20a–b.

[19] *Sunzi*, ch. 8, 34a. See also *Sun Bin bing fa*, 19.

[20] *Wuzi*, ch. 1, 6a, 9a; ch. 4, 37a–b; *Sima fa*, ch. 3, 29a, 39b; *Wei Liaozi*, ch. 1, 18b–19a; ch. 4, 4a.

[21] *Liu tao*, ch. 6, 48b. Virilocal sons-in-law were little more than slaves, men who were 'married' into a household to provide labour.

[22] *Liu tao*, ch. 1, 26b. See also *Guo yu*, 85, 404, 420.

shame as an emotion instilled in the common soldiers through education, shame as the consequence of punishments, shame as the condition of lowly people to be escaped from through service in the army and the threat posed by the honour/shame of those who prided themselves on their private virtue. Along with the civil forms discussed earlier, these constituted the basic repertoire of the honour/shame complex that emerged in the early empires.

Under the Han, the old military ideal of honour also became the target of specific criticism, as in an argument from Liu Xiang's anthology, *The Garden of Discourses*:

Ministers who love war must be carefully examined. Ashamed of some minor disgrace, they arouse huge resentment; coveting some small profit, they lose great masses of men.[23]

The authors narrate a cautionary tale from the *Master Zuo* about a man who, taking offence at a ritual slight, plunges his state into a bloody conflict in which so many perished that it took more than a decade to bury all the dead. This anecdote demonstrates the final rejection of the insistence on warfare as the central arena of honour.

Honour and the Han Bureaucracy

As discussed above, the redefinition of honour and shame in the Warring States era developed in two primary directions. First, scholars or intellectuals formed into groups that redefined what was shameful in terms of their new visions of a good society. These definitions specified the honourable and the shameful through the virtues and practices that the writers advocated: humaneness and ritual for the Confucian tradition, versus a commitment to innovation and loyalty advocated by theorists of statecraft. In the first centuries of the imperial order, these claims developed into a broader project of defining in terms of their moral character the social elite that filled state offices. This entailed redefining the relation of potential bureaucrats to the ruler, and also distinguishing the former from elite competitors.

This re-definition of officials entailed a contradictory process of both increased honour and increased degradation. As members of the court in a realm of unparalleled size and prestige, they shared with the emperor his new glory as a nearly divine being. They also were increasingly distinguished

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[23]   *Shuo yuan*, 236.

by literary learning that set them apart from the mass of the population. On the other hand, unlike the old Zhou nobility, imperial ministers were explicitly defined as the emperor's servants or slaves. They were thus in a position that their Roman equivalents regarded as degrading and often avoided acknowledging.[24] But as the men, at least in their theories, made decisions and carried them out, they persuaded themselves that they were the true centres of the system. Their actual status as slaves was mentioned only in criticisms of the bad rulers who called it to their attention.

The first application of honour and shame to re-definitions of ruler and minister appears in the writings of Jia Yi. These emphasized scholarship as the meeting ground of ruler and ministers, with the latter ideally instructing their lord. They also elaborated the theme of honour, or more accurately the avoidance of shame, as central to the imperial system. The most influential discussion begins with a metaphor to demonstrate how the ruler and ministers were bound together:

The honour of the ruler is like a great hall, the collective ministers are the steps [leading up to it], and the masses the ground. Thus if there are nine steps upward, then the floor of the hall is far from the ground, and the hall is lofty. If there were no steps, then the floor would be close to the ground, and the hall would be lowly. What is lofty is hard to clamber up, but what is lowly is easy to ascend/humiliate …

A village saying says, 'If you want to throw something at a rat, avoid the vessels' … If the rat is near to the vessels, then you will be afraid and not throw at it, because you fear harming the vessels. How much more are the noble ministers close to the ruler! So he uses honour, shame, and regulated rituals to control true gentlemen, granting them death [i.e. letting them commit suicide] without the disgrace of public execution … Now to subject them to the same laws as the masses – to be tattooed, have their noses cut off, heads shaved, legs cut off, be whipped, cursed, executed and exposed in the market – then wouldn't the hall have no steps? Wouldn't the disgrace of public execution impinge too closely on the ruler? If the sense of honour and shame is not practised, then wouldn't the great ministers be unable to wield important powers, and wouldn't the high officers have shameless heart/minds like the lowest menials?[25]

This and related passages elaborated the need to distinguish officials from the ordinary people by, in effect, assimilating them to old Zhou nobility. They reiterate the theme of instilling honour and shame among the officials, while assuming that the common people must be controlled through physical punishments.

[24]   Roller 2001, ch. 4; Wilson 2014; Romm 2014.
[25]   *Han shu*, 2254–5.

Here the honour of the Son of Heaven depended upon honouring his officials, and this implies likewise that the honour of the officials depended upon that of the ruler; the honour of the entire court rose and fell together. Further, it argues that any sense of honour and shame begins with the manner in which the ruler treats his minister, so that it is the ruler who is the source of these sentiments. However, the sentiments must be absorbed by the officials, who come to have a sense of honour and self-respect, to regulate themselves according to the dictates of ritual, and to be willing to die for their ruler. Thus the force that ultimately holds together the government and state is instilled within the minds of the officials. Jia Yi also argued that being controlled by honour and shame contrasts with the pursuit of profit that characterizes ordinary people, and above all merchants.[26]

Another discussion by Jia Yi of shame in the political world goes back to the theme of warfare, but in the context of a unitary empire. Discussing the conflict with the Xiongnu, he assumes that the huge and civilized Han empire was by its very nature superior to this much smaller nomadic empire to the north. Consequently, the inability of the Han to impose their superiority, even in the absence of military defeats, was a matter of shame for the ruler.[27] In reality, at this time the Han emperor and the Xiongnu ruler exchanged letters recognizing each other as 'brothers', and hence de facto equals, or describing the world as divided between 'two masters', one ruling the sedentary peoples and the other the nomads. Jia Yi's arguments had no relation to reality, but they did set the terms for much later thought on relations of the sedentary empires to the nomads.

While these ideas were only theory, they found expression in Han legal practice. When high officials committed major crimes, they were often granted the privilege of committing suicide rather than being subjected to mutilating punishments and the exposure of their corpses in the marketplace. Such 'mercy' towards officials was not invariable, but not subjecting officials to public punishment was common.[28] While emperors often ignored the argument that their own honour depended on that of their

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[26] *Han shu*, 2256–8; *Jiazi xin shu*, 290; *Shang shu da zhuan*, 38–9.

[27] *Han shu*, 2240–2.

[28] *Han shu*, 100, 120, 123, 142, 146, 157, 170, 176, 179, 182, 187, 204, 242, 244, 246 (2), 262, 268, 273, 283, 308, 338, 341, 342, 347, 357, 1172 (2), 1215, 1305, 1308, 1309, 1311, 1312, 1331, 1334, 1335, 1336, 1365, 1424 (2), 1668, 1903, 1917, 1925, 1932, 2062, 2118, 2219, 2260 (this cites Jia Yi's essay), 2397, 2411, 2412, 2417, 2449, 2455, 2646, 2698, 2759, 2762, 2794, 2803, 2887, 2965, 2994, 3094, 3288, 3307, 3325, 3359, 3375, 3408, 3501–02, 3604, 3608, 3648, 3650 (also cites Jia Yi), 3658, 3662, 3665, 3670–71, 3704, 3732, 3786, 3949, 3959, 4007, 4030, 4043, 4044, 4065, 4123, 4153 (3), 4165, 4185, 4189.

officials, suicide rather than public disgrace became the conventional way to dispose of officials who fell foul of the law.

While self-regulation through shame was held to distinguish officials from the common people, the latter *could* exhibit a sense of shame. However, this operated differently from that of the elite. The ruler's and officials' sense of honour and shame supposedly hinged upon a single-minded devotion to the public good which necessarily paid no attention to material gains. The people, in contrast, had to first enjoy material security before they could experience honour and shame. The *locus classicus* for this idea was in a brief rhyme from the *Master Guan*, 'When the granaries are full, one knows rituals and regulations. When food and clothing are sufficient, one knows glory and disgrace.' Jia Yi and several later texts cited this idea.[29] A related argument is that when people are poor, they are ashamed of their poverty, rather than their moral failings.[30] The idea that the people's feeling shame depended on their material comfort moved into conventional political discourse, as in a memorial written in the early 60s BCE:

If wind and rain become untimely, this harms agriculture and sericulture. When these are harmed, then the people become hungry and cold, and then they lose all sense of honour and shame. It is from this that banditry and treason arise.[31]

The most important text in the intellectual generation after Jia Yi was the *Master of Huainan*. It incorporated the model of history developed in the *Master Lao* and the *Master Zhuang*, in which the ideal world of high antiquity had been characterized by the absence of distinctions and hierarchy. The appearance of shame was a function of decline from this original unity. The text, espousing a different vision of the highest form of humanity, also links honour to overcoming the emotional weakness that allowed one to be enslaved by the desire for objects. Thus one passage describes beings who are 'without attachments' to the objects of the world and thus recognize that the customary practice of the present age is 'shameful'. Another compares Confucians to poor villagers who imagine that banging on pots and jars is fine music, until one day they hear real drums and bells and then find their earlier music 'shameful'. Yet another simply argues that what was regarded as glorious in antiquity is now regarded as disgraceful. Another passage argues that for one who truly understands the 'principles of glory and disgrace' the praise of the entire world offers no encouragement, and the censure of the entire world no dissuasion. Finally, the text argued that

[29] *Guanzi*, 1; *Jiazi xin shu*, 343, 515, 517; *Yan tie lun*, 64; *Shuo yuan*, 73, 394; *Qian fu lun*, 14.

[30] *Qian fu lun*, 130, 226, 246; *Han shu*, 1643, 3064; *Yan tie lun*, 64; *Han ji*, 48, 177.

[31] *Han shu*, ch. 74, 3139.

since people of the present age 'accepted insult and treated disgrace lightly, coveted material gain and lacked all shame', they could not be controlled by the methods of the earlier sages.[32]

The discourse on shame continued to be elaborated into the late Western Han, as exemplified in anthologies compiled by Liu Xiang. While there were no major new ideas, stories and maxims explain the differences between the true gentleman and the common man in terms of what they regarded as shameful. One anecdote argued that while the former does not love death and hate honour or wealth, he would be ashamed to avoid the one and pursue the others if it entailed violating his moral code. Unlike common people, he has a firm sense of self which is not disturbed by the temptations of wealth and empty honours.[33]

This contrast between the gentleman and the common man in terms of their sense of self is even more explicit in maxims, such as the following:

The common man regards harming his body [i.e. suffering mutilating punishment] as shameful, while the true gentleman regards harming his duty as shameful. The common man values profit, while the honourable man of service values his reputation.[34]

Here the contrast is between the 'body/self', which would include social aspects and moral character, and the simple physical body. The common people are defined by the latter, an idea that dated back to the *Mencius*.

The same idea is articulated in a discussion of the punishment of whipping in an earlier story that involved symbolically whipping the ruler for excessive hunting:

I have heard that a true gentleman is shamed by [whipping], while the petty man regards it as physically painful. If the shame of it does not lead to a change in behaviour, what good would there be in making it painful?[35]

Common people are concerned solely with their physical existence, both in being attracted by sensual pleasures and in fearing physical pain. Consequently, the moral instruction that scholar/officials treated as the highest form of government was itself something to which only they would respond.[36] Closely related is the idea that while the common people would find punishments shameful, the scholar would not, since his own moral

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[32] *Huainanzi*, 26, 28, 29, 108 (2), 120, 157, 184, 191, 215, 320, 332, 345, 357.

[33] *Shuo yuan*, 78.

[34] *Shuo yuan*, 398, 399, 404. For the argument that the gentleman's honour is what is shameful to the common person, and vice versa, see 100, 110, 112.

[35] *Shuo yuan*, 222.

[36] *Shuo yuan*, 143.

judgment, rather than the often corrupt process of legal punishments, determined what was honourable and what was not. The same criticism of sacrificing both honour and self in pursuit of material gains was applied to venal officials.[37]

Indeed venal officials and other greedy people supposedly even abandoned concern for their own bodies in their pursuit of material gain:

In antiquity, true gentlemen would not approach people who had suffered mutilating punishments, because the latter were no longer human … Now worthless people covet profit to the extent that they would ruin their own bodies … How is this? Having once been castrated [to become eunuchs at court], with the wound not even healed they attend the ruler's person, entering and exiting the palaces. They receive their own salaries, and also enjoy gifts from high officials [seeking their support]. Their persons are honoured, and their wives and children obtain this wealth. Consequently even some in the ranks of high officials would not begrudge being subjected to the knife; how much more so the common masses! So what shame can exist?[38]

In this argument even the most minimal sense of shame vanishes out of a devotion to wealth and power as the highest goods. It presents the extreme expression of the idea that true shame is in contradiction with the pursuit of wealth, and that a life devoted to wealth is ultimately debased.

The passage above also highlights another aspect of the discourse on shame, the idea that the commitment to one's family undercuts morality and honour. This ultimately derives from the tension between universality and partiality. Since the highest good is a commitment to the public interest, devotion to the family (which is by definition private and partial) undercuts the truly good. Thus the ideal public-minded official is as follows:

When handling official business he does not manage a private household; when in a public building he does not speak of money or profit; when confronted by public law he does not side with his own kin; in recommending worthies for public service he does not avoid his enemies.[39]

To be public-minded entailed being all-inclusive, so partiality to certain groups – most notably one's own family – meant abandoning the public good and thus failing as an official. Working for one's kin, thinking about material wealth (which would benefit them), or granting any consideration to the kin group were all derelictions of public duty. Even the reference to

37   *Yan tie lun*, 41, 73; *Qian fu lun*, 33.
38   *Yan tie lun*, 118; *Da Dai li ji* 3, 71, 89.
39   *Shuo yuan*, 343.

not avoiding enemies in making recommendations is conventionally paired with the injunction to not favour one's own son.

The same schema also informs discussions about the significance or range of certain virtues, which also set the state against the family:

Great humaneness extends kindness to all within the four seas, while small humaneness stops with one's own wife and children. It does this by working for profit. His wife's kindness consoles him, and they elaborate their domestic affections, beautifying their hypocrisy … Even if they are honoured in their own day, the scholar-gentleman takes this to be shameful.[40]

It is notable here that as the range of love contracts, it naturally turns into concern over amassing material wealth, which is the focus of the mind that has lost all shame and self-control.

This tension between public service and the material interests of the household extended to scholarship, which ideally was also universal in scope. Thus Ban Gu (CE 32–92) wrote of the celebrated scholar Dong Zhongshu (?179–?104 BCE):

Correcting his own person, he guided his subordinates, and he repeatedly sent up memorials of remonstrance … When he retired from office and returned home, to the end of his life he paid no attention to his family's property, so that he could devote himself entirely to self-cultivation and writing.[41]

This narrative is based on the assumptions laid out above, in which state service, moral self-cultivation, and scholarship form a single complex focused on the common good. These are set against the family, which in its partiality is identified with the concern over wealth and property. Writing in the late Eastern Han, Wang Fu (d. CE 167) developed this account into an elaborate discussion of the tension between devotion to study and worry about money, and again the latter was tied to being part of a family. Truly great scholars could avoid both the temptations of living in a wealthy household or the distractions of performing physical labour because one's family was poor. All scholars, he argued, had to literally abandon their families to go and study with a teacher, and even when living at home, they were obliged to pay no attention to the household's affairs, affairs that would destroy their mental resolve and shrink their intellectual range.[42]

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[40] *Shuo yuan*, 99–100. See also 35–6, where an official's greed for salary is linked to concern for his family, as is the formation of corrupt factions. See also *Huainanzi*, 184, 312; *Shi ji*, 2447, 3133; *Yan tie lun*, 21, 39.
[41] *Han shu*, 2525.
[42] *Qian fu lun*, 6–7; *Yan tie lun*, 47; *Hou Han shu*, 1249, 1251.

These arguments assume that wealthy families harm both the state order and the public spirit of their members. In contrast, other texts argue that if a family is poor and the parents old, then filial piety would require accepting any appointment, without any moral considerations. In some anecdotes a scholar notes that parents cannot defer their deaths, and repents spending all his youth away from his family. This leads other scholars to abandon their teachers and return home.[43]

However, even these passages do not challenge the contradiction between pursuing wealth and serving the public. While they assert that a poor scholar with old parents would 'not be particular about the office he will fill', the pursuit of wealth remains a target of condemnation. Indeed, some stories explicitly argued that one currently in public service must value his duty to his ruler above the lives of his parents, which are a private concern. One story justifies dying in battle, a public sacrifice that deprived parents of filial support in their old age. In another, a man declines to take up a post in order to take care of his father, but the latter commands that he take the appointment because an official salary would improve their lives. The son eventually commands an army against rebels, who threaten to kill his father unless he desists. Arguing that as an official he can no longer be a filial son, he attacks and thus brings about his father's death. Although in the end he commits suicide, it is noteworthy that while the man was in service, duty to his ruler surpassed loyalty to his parents.[44]

This insistence on abandoning one's family on entering public service was explicitly built into the practices of the Han state. The early imperial state was based on the assumption that the relations of a ruler to his officials and that of family members to one another constituted two distinct orders. Thus early Chinese officials, and anyone in the Han realm, could not mention their family name in communication, whether spoken or written, with the emperor. Instead they used the formula 'your servant + personal name'. The right to name one's family in communications with the emperor was only occasionally granted as a unique privilege to the chief of the Xiongnu, who was sometimes recognized as 'political kin'. Slaves likewise had no surname and no legal family, and in taking an appointment people left their family, gave up their surname, and became the emperor's slave.

This idea was also marked in usages pertaining to careers. To begin an official career was to 'remove one's self [from the household]' or to 'rise out of the household'. Requesting to retire was to 'beg for one's skeleton',

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[43] *Han shi wai zhuan*, 16–7, 246–7, 308–9.
[44] *Han shi wai zhuan*, 363–4.

where the skeleton was the part of the body that belonged to one's 'bone-and-flesh' kin. Biographies of officials often specified whether they died 'in office' or 'in the household'. All these usages indicate that the state and the family constituted two distinct realms, and that participation in one meant withdrawal from the other. The state was the realm of the 'universal', the 'public' or the 'lord', all indicated by the term *gong*. Similarly the family was the realm of the 'private', 'partial' or 'limited', all indicated by the term *si*. Families were by nature partial and limited in their interests, as discussed above. Arguments in the *Analects*, the *Mencius* and the *Master Han Fei* over whether fathers and sons should testify in court against one another indicate the same tension.[45]

The argument on honour sketched above was also part of a broader re-thinking of the nature of the government under the Han dynasty.[46] Although the Han was the direct heir of the Qin, adopting all its basic institutions and legal code, its agents sought to distinguish themselves from the disastrous failure of the Qin state. They increasingly did this by claiming to be derived from an idealized Zhou that they reinvented as a centralized state, with an absolute king, no hereditary officials and no powerful cadet lineages that were lesser replicas of the state. Another aspect of this was to pattern the Han bureaucracy on the old Zhou nobility by the aforementioned practice of excluding officials from mutilating punishments. This idea was facilitated by the fact that the word *shi*, which identified the service elite of the Qin and Han empires, earlier had indicated the lowest level of the Zhou nobility, and in some contexts had referred to the entire nobility.[47] In addition to arguing that officials should not be subjected to degrading punishments, Jia Yi also asserted that they should be granted privileges in sumptuary regulations regarding dress, numbers of chariots and so forth. This idea, largely carried out in practice, extended into Han debates over whether officials were entitled to funerary shrines and ritual tablets.[48]

The equation of Han officials with the Zhou nobility also informed economic thinking. As discussed in this chapter, many texts contrasted the sense of honour or shame that would ideally guide officials with the desire for material goods that motivated the common people, particularly merchants. Dong Zongshu developed this into the argument that officials should eschew all concern with agriculture, manufacture and trade. He even compared this with Heaven's giving each species of animal a different

[45] Ogata 1979.
[46] Lewis 1999:351–60.
[47] Lewis 1990: 30–3, 75–8.
[48] *Han shu*, 2254–8.

mode of defending itself or of moving.[49] These ideas were also elaborated in the *Discourse on Salt and Iron* and other texts that criticized government interference in trade. Since officials were bound to the ruler through the debt they owed him, they were expected to devote themselves to public service rather than private enrichment.[50]

Honour and Violence in the Han

While discussions of shame and honour in the Han focused on the distinctive values of elite and non-elite, the earlier pattern of marking honour through violence survived in the insistence on an ethical obligation to avenge one's lord or kin.[51] This ethic of revenge was transferred from the old nobility to the entire population through the model of the 'wandering bravos', fighters who sought service as retainers under the rulers and leading ministers of the late Warring States. These men exemplified the exchange of loyal service for recognition that defined political relations in the new states.[52] Their ethic, in which honour depended both on devotion to the death and the obligation to avenge a fallen lord, provided a model for the emerging ideal of the bureaucrat.

However, the strongest claims for vengeance as a moral obligation emerged among the Confucians, above all in the *Gongyang Tradition*. One passage states that Zhao Dun murdered his lord, but then later refers to him. The commentator asks why he was mentioned, when it was conventional to never again mention someone who assassinated his lord. The answer explains that he was not the actual killer, but that he had failed to kill the latter, which was tantamount to killing the lord himself. Another passage suppresses mentioning the interment of a deceased lord, explaining that he had been killed and his murderers left unpunished, which meant that he had no true sons or retainers. Thus vengeance was a necessary aspect of the obligations of burial and mourning that defined social ties in the period.

The *Gongyang* also made responsibility for vengeance part of the state order. A commentary on a passage describing the destruction of a state

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[49]   *Han shu*, 2512; *Chun qiu fan lu*, 221–3, 229–30. One passage in this text treats salary as another expression of material desire, rather than a distinctive extension of a sense of honor. See 172–3.

[50]   *Yan tie lun*, 1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 21, 23–24, 29–30, 39, 40, 42.

[51]   See Lewis 1990: 80–94 for sources and details.

[52]   Masubuchi 1962: 49–136. For studies in English of the bravos, see Liu 1967; Ch'ü 1972: 161, 188–98, 232, 245–7.

argued that this act, ordinarily 'a great evil', was virtuous because it avenged a wrong against an earlier ruler. It also stated that the obligation for vengeance was so great that one must be ready to sacrifice oneself for it. Third, it posited that whereas the obligation to avenge kin ended with the generations that experienced the offence, the obligation for rulers was eternal, because 'the lords of a state are a single body'. Fourth, it asserted that one reason for the obligation to avenge was that an unexpiated offence made civil discourse between the parties impossible. Finally, it argued that the duty for vengeance existed only because there was no true ruler. In an ideal world, the Son of Heaven would punish all murders.

While the idealization of vengeance between states was no longer relevant in the Han, the idea was widespread that major social bonds, particularly those of kin, entailed an obligation for vengeance. First, Confucian ritual texts agreed that vengeance was a moral obligation, and that the degree of obligation hinged on the relation between victim and avenger. Since failure to avenge made impossible a shared existence, these texts provided an objective standard to measure the degree of obligation in terms of the distance to which one must pursue the offender. This idea was incorporated into state-sponsored Han texts, such as the *White Tiger Hall Discourses*.[53]

Reconciling the moral obligation of vengeance with the state's claim to be the sole enforcer of the law became a central point of tension in East Asian legal theory and practice. This tension was articulated by the Eastern Han scholar, Xun Yue (CE 148–209), who noted that revenge was an ancient form of 'duty', but that one had to establish laws that would keep it restricted. Should the murderer fail to observe the rules of avoidance stipulated above, then the avenger should be free to kill him, but if he observed the rules and the avenger still killed him, then the life of the latter should be forfeit.

Han historical records, despite their courtly bias, contain abundant evidence of popular recourse to revenge, including more than sixty cases of murder or attempted murder described as vengeance. A memorial by Bao Xuan (d. CE 3) listed the major causes of unnatural deaths among the people, and these included the reciprocal slaughter of those seeking vengeance. In a memorial to the founder of the Eastern Han, the scholar Huan Tan (24 BCE – CE 56) argued that seeking vengeance had become so common and so admired that it constituted a private legal system.

Despite worries that the prevalence of vengeance privatized the law, many officials condoned the practice. Numerous local officials refused to arrest those guilty of murder for revenge, or released those who had been

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[53] *Li ji*, ch. 3, 10b; ch. 7, 17a–b.

arrested. Although some of these officials went into hiding for failing to enforce the law, many continued in office. Officials even granted avengers special privileges, such as exemption from corvée, or recommended them for office. Both officials and the authors of the histories describe avengers as models of 'duty', and several officials publically erected illustrated memorial tablets celebrating the filiality of avengers. Official support of vengeance reached such a degree that for a period in the Eastern Han releasing avengers was regarded as a fixed legal precedent.

Some evidence shows that concern for honour underpinned this ideal of vengeance. First, the constant reference to it as a 'duty' indicates that to avenge was honourable, and failure to do so a disgrace. Some texts explicitly stated that one must avenge in order to 'cleanse the shame' of a death, a formula used in the earlier military justifications for annulling a past defeat by a present victory.

This pattern began with the *Gongyang Tradition*'s justification of Wu Zixu's right to avenge his father, elaborated in the Eastern Han by Xu Gan in a discussion of the relation of longevity to virtue. He noted earlier discussions of this issue, including several that cited Wu Zixu as an example of a virtuous man who died young. Sun Ao first argued that physical longevity was entirely due to allotted life span, but then asserted that since Wu Zixu had in the name of honour cast aside the body received from his parents, explicitly to 'cleanse his shame and avenge his father', his death was justified. Xu Gan points out that the argument is self-contradictory and concludes:

Although Zixu had the fault of enmity with his ruler, he nevertheless could contemplate his own heart/mind and recognize its humaneness. Right up to his suicide he did not change; this is the moral integrity [*jie*] of a minister.[54]

It is important to note that both Xu Gan and Sun Ao *assume* that the purpose of vengeance is to wash away shame. The point of the argument is elsewhere, so this is unintentional testimony on a point that they both take for granted.

Moreover, Xu Gan's citing Wu Zixu's willingness to die or commit suicide in the name of moral integrity constitutes a second major strain in the interlinking of violence and honour during the Han dynasty. The most extensive discussions of dying for duty or moral integrity are found in the *Abundant Dew of the Spring-and-Autumn Annals*, attributed to Dong Zhongshu. Like most texts from this period, it was produced by multiple

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[54] *Zhong lun*, ch. 2, 13b–14a; *Gongyang zhuan*, Lord Ding, year 4, ch. 25, 15a–16b. On using violent revenge to wipe away the shame of an insult, see also *Huainanzi*, 328; *Chun qiu fan lu*, 267; *Han ji*, 262, 263.

hands, but the disappearance of interest in Dong's New-Text philosophy after the fall of the Han means that it is almost certainly largely written under that dynasty.[55]

The most important discussion of willingness to die for honour deals with the *Gongyang* passage on destroying states for vengeance. Whereas the *Gongyang* had praised the avenger, the *Abundant Dew* focuses its attention on the lord of the state that was destroyed, celebrating his steadfast acceptance of his own death. It thus is much like the discussion of Wu Zixu, praising those who willingly accept their deaths when they know that what they are doing is right.[56]

Another passage uses the distinction between the shameful and the honoured to establish when it is or is not proper to die for moral integrity. It cites two cases in which a noble saved his lord's life through deception, but one is celebrated and the other condemned. The *Abundant Dew* justifies this because the former saved his ruler by placing him in a position that was 'honoured', while the latter saved him by placing him in a situation that was 'shameful'. It also links these to people's natural moral sentiments (described in several early texts), both the joy of the sage in doing what was honourable, and the shame that any person should feel in suffering disgrace simply in order to survive.[57]

The celebration of dying for honour is also notable in the *Outer Tradition of the Odes by Master Han*, attributed to Han Ying, a contemporary and interlocutor of Dong Zhongshu.[58] Numerous anecdotes in this text exalt dying for moral rectitude, and contrast this with concern over wealth, status and material well-being. Many of these were also incorporated into the anecdote anthologies compiled by Liu Xiang at the end of the Western Han, with entire chapters devoted to the theme. Thus, the ideal of a moral heroism marked by the willingness to sacrifice oneself, and shame at surviving through moral compromise, became central to the definition of the man of service (and as an extension to some exemplary women).[59] This ideal of self-sacrifice figured throughout the political history of the Han, but became particularly prominent in the mass executions accompanying the 'ban on factions' in the 160s CE.[60]

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[55] Arbuckle 1991, parts 3–4; Queen 1996.

[56] *Chun qiu fan lu*, 83–4, 135.

[57] *Chun qiu fan lu*, 8–9, 59–61, 370.

[58] *Han shu*, ch. 88, 3613.

[59] *Han Shi wai zhuan* 9–10, 11–2, 12–3, 14, 15, 26–7, 27–9, 48–9, 66–7, 68–70, 200, 224–6, 242–5, 261–2, 274–5, 321, 325–6, 327; *Shuo yuan*, ch. 4; *Xin xu*, ch. 7–8; *Lie nü zhuan*, ch. 4–5.

[60] *Han shu*, 3287–8.

Conclusion

The history of the honour/shame complex in early imperial China unfolded against a deep background of a primarily military definition of honour that had characterized the pre-imperial nobility. These men had fought both inter-state wars and vendettas verging on civil war in the name of honour for themselves and their lineage. Shame was primarily a consequence of military defeat, and the disgrace of such a defeat could be erased only by subsequent victory.

Unlike in Rome, where the army in the late Republic and the empire emerged as a group apart that preserved the military focus of honour, Warring States armies were based on mass peasant levies to be controlled through the 'twin handles' of rewards (titles and land) and punishments. At the same time, the emergent philosophical traditions chose to set themselves apart by regarding as honourable what others treated as useless (moral virtues and literary attainments), and shameful what others regarded as noble (wealth and honour). Intellectuals soon came to define themselves as those who followed the course of duty because it was honourable, and avoided misconduct because it was shameful. This distinguished them from lesser men who toiled primarily for material gain, whether in military service or in economic pursuits.

While the military focus of honour/shame largely disappeared, honour continued to be defined through the violence of vengeance and self-sacrifice. The violence-based ethic of the pre-imperial nobility passed to the Han elite through the gangster associations that assembled as retainers of the last great nobles. These associations were based on oaths of loyalty, the ideal of devotion to the death to one's lord, and the belief that one's honour had to be defended through violent revenge. This ideal was written into the Confucian ritual classics and historical commentaries, which articulated a model of kinship wherein the closeness of blood ties was marked by the degree of obligation to avenge a murdered kin.

The second major development in the use of violence to demarcate honour/shame among the elite was the idea articulated by the early Han writer Jia Yi that the ruler's honour depended on that of his officials, and that of officials on the prestige of the ruler. Honouring the officials entailed not subjecting them to mutilating punishments or public executions, but instead allowing them the 'privilege' of committing suicide. This idea came to constitute a cliché or commonplace, and hundreds of cases show officials or nobles (members of the imperial family) having recourse to suicide

rather than suffering formal punishments. These suicides were sometimes formally imposed, sometimes elected by the man concerned before falling into the hands of the ruler's agents, and sometimes used by other officials to manipulate a rival at court into removing himself from the scene in the name of preserving his honour.

The two centuries of the Eastern Han witnessed further refinements of the honour/shame complex. First, 'scriptural' injunctions to avenge deceased kin became an active ideal at every level of society. Disapproving officials at court described how the activities of avengers had come to define a 'private' legal system, and the associations of gangsters were notable in this. Local officials increasingly refused to prosecute avengers, even those who killed other officials, and even appointed avengers to government posts.

Second, from the first century BCE, and increasingly in the two centuries of the Eastern Han, increasing land holdings and wealth gave emergent scholar-elite families some economic independence from the court, a major role as the leaders of local communities, and the consequent ability to act as middle-men linking a court that was losing bureaucratic control to local society. Their economic assertiveness was intellectually justified by the active charity and emergency relief that was fundamental to their local authority.[61]

This emergence of families who dominated their local communities, and hence could act politically outside the court, led to the last great development in the history of the honour/shame complex. As the Eastern Han court witnessed the alternation of power between eunuchs and imperial affines, many leading members of the formal bureaucracy withdrew into critical opposition to the court in the form of associations devoted to 'pure criticism', i.e. the criticism of the court by those who were truly honourable. In the 'partisan clique' battles of the 160s CE, many such men were executed, and their execution was defined as the highest form of the 'scholar's moral integrity' or the 'lofty integrity that dies for duty/ righteousness'. Such willingness to die in the name of one's moral purity became *the* defining form of elite honour at the end of the Han dynasty, and it provided the earliest intellectual rationalization for the emergence of powerful families, sometimes called an 'aristocracy', that across the next centuries maintained a status higher than that of the short-lived ruling houses of the period.

[61] Lewis 2006: 212–29.

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6 | Slavery and Forced Labour in Early China and the Roman World

WALTER SCHEIDEL

Introduction

The comparative study of ancient western and eastern Eurasia is still in its infancy. Most existing work focuses on the intellectual history of Greece and China.[1] Over the last few years, this body of scholarship has been supplemented by comparative investigations of state formation and institutions in the Qin-Han and Roman periods.[2] Comparisons of economic features remain exceedingly rare.[3] Owing to massive imbalances in the available amount and quality of data, this is unlikely to change anytime soon: on the Chinese side, problems include a predominance of moralizing texts (even more so than for the Roman world), the lack of documentary evidence for economic conditions, the relative immaturity of regional archaeology, and the historiographical legacy of Marxist developmental schemata. This unpromising situation is all the more unfortunate as analytical comparison can be very useful: it defamiliarizes the deceptively familiar, helps us causally connect discrete variables to observed outcomes, and allows us to establish broader patterns across individual historical cases.[4]

When it comes to the role of slavery and other forms of unfree labour, we stand at the very beginning of any kind of comparative engagement. I start from the observation that while slave-owning was widespread in history, large-scale slavery (in what are sometimes labelled 'slave societies', as opposed to mere 'societies with slaves') was limited to only a few societies, ancient Greece and Rome among them. Forced labour, by contrast, was a common feature of early states: notable examples include Ur III, Assyria, New Kingdom Egypt, and the Inca empire.[5] In the following, I ask how different ancient Rome was from early China in terms of slavery and forced

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[1] Tanner 2009 provides an excellent survey.

[2] Scheidel 2005–, 2009, 2015. On representations, see Mutschler and Mittag 2008.

[3] The only exception so far concerns monetary history: Scheidel 2008b, 2009b, 2010.

[4] For the uses and different types of historical comparison, see Scheidel 2009a, Scheidel in press, and the literature referenced there.

[5] See now Monson and Scheidel 2015.

labour; what accounts for observable differences; and what they contribute to our understanding of overall economic development.

The Status and Sources of Slaves

A comparative perspective may centre on conceptualization – how slavery was perceived and defined – or on economic dimensions – what slaves did and how much their contribution mattered. My emphasis is on the latter but I begin by briefly touching on the former. According to classical Roman law everybody was either free or slave. Yet the non-slave population de facto included slave-like individuals such as those fighting in the arena or convicts labelled 'slaves of the punishment' (*servi poeni*). In early China, the fundamental distinction was between the 'good' and the 'base'. Free commoners were 'good' while slaves counted as 'base', as did convicts (who did not technically become slaves) and other marginalized groups such as pawns and migrants.[6] Employing Orlando Patterson's terminology, these lowly persons were all considered 'socially dead'.[7] In both environments, 'barbarian' outsiders were seen as suitable for enslavement. Broadly speaking, therefore, Rome and early imperial China entertained similar notions of servile and non-servile identity.

As Patterson correctly observed, the enslavement of the relatives of condemned criminals was the only truly legitimate source of slavery in early China.[8] Other mechanisms were common but formally illegal (such as kidnapping or the unauthorized sale of children by parents) or extralegal (such as the capture of foreigners).[9] Even the enslavement of criminals themselves (reported only for the reign of the much-maligned usurper Wang Mang) appears to have been unusual and potentially illicit: by contrast, the enslavement of their kin was an established deterrent rooted in the powerful concept of collective liability within the household or even beyond.[10]

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[6] Pulleyblank 1958: 204–5; Yates 2002: 299, 316.

[7] Thus Yates 2002: 317. For the concept, see Patterson 1982: 38–51.

[8] Patterson 1982: 127.

[9] On enslavement under the Western Han, see Wilbur 1943: 72–97, esp. 73, 79 for the families of criminals. A statute of 186 BCE provided for the enslavement of family members of those convicted to three or more years of penal servitude (Barbieri-Low 2007: 246). Execution likewise triggered enslavement of kin (Wilbur (1943: 79). See Wang 1953: 308–10 for the continuation of this practice in the Period of Disunion. For the status of war captives, see below; for other sources, see Wilbur 1943: 85–8 (sale of free during famines), 92–96 (import of foreign slaves), Wang 1953: 307–8, 312–14.

[10] Pulleyblank 1958 argues for a penal origin of early Chinese slavery, followed by Patterson 1982: 127.

In the early stages of the Roman state, certain categories of wrongdoers were liable to enslavement (such as defaulting debtors as early as in the reputedly fifth-century BCE Laws of the Twelve Tables and draft dodgers) but by the late Republican period this was no longer the case. Later on, very narrowly conceived ad hoc laws providing for the enslavement of free individuals faking slave status to defraud buyers or of certain free mothers who bore children by male slaves appeared but never became common. Just as in China, convicts condemned to hard labour in mines and quarries (*ad metallum*) did not technically acquire servile status. In both societies, for what it was worth, illegal enslavement did not formally alter free status. Enslavement of foreign enemies was a de facto procedure justified by custom: by *ius gentium* in the Roman case, which is a fancy way of saying that it was simply a fact of life, and similarly in China. In both cases, this type of enslavement could be construed as a functional alternative to and equivalent to being killed in war, resulting in 'social death'.

Legal niceties aside, the sources of slaves may have greatly differed in practical terms. Unlike in Rome, where mass enslavement of war captives was repeatedly reported for centuries, we lack comparable references from the Warring States period, when wars were fought on an increasingly extravagant scale: if not killed outright (a common occurrence), captured soldiers were turned into convicts providing forced labour for the state or were absorbed into the victorious state's forces, and conquered civilians were expected to produce tax income and labour services for their new masters.[11] For much of the Han period warfare was relatively limited in scope. In as much as enemies were seized, their status often remains unclear and used to attract considerable debate in modern scholarship.[12] There is no evidence to the effect that enslaved war captives played a significant role in the Han economy.[13] For the fourth to the early seventh centuries CE, when large-scale interstate warfare was rife, the sources frequently mention the capture of substantial numbers of people. However, their final status is usually unknown; mass enslavement is explicitly mentioned on only two

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[11] Yates 2002: 302. Note, however, that valour in battle was to be rewarded by the allocation of land, houses and slaves (Lewis 1990: 62), a practice that at least suggests the enslavement of some war captives.

[12] Wilbur 1943: 98–117 devotes an entire chapter to this problem. Focusing on the wars against the Xiongnu, he concludes that captives were at least at times enslaved.

[13] Wilbur 1943: 115 argues that Xiongnu captives were unsuitable for many occupations and unlikely to have been of great economic importance. The 30,000 state slaves who reportedly tended 300,000 horses on thirty-six state ranches at some point under the Han may have been captives from the steppe (ibid.).

occasions in CE 554.[14] The observation that most recipients of gifts of slaves by the state were victorious generals is at best suggestive of the enslavement of war captives.[15] In any case, in marked contrast to the situation in Rome, we lack references to wartime enslavement that would have supplied slaves to private buyers.

The scale of natural reproduction is empirically unknown in both societies.[16] Slave families and hereditary slave status are known from early China.[17] There, the offspring of two slave parents were unfree; unions of a free man with a slave woman probably produced slave children, but the legal provisions are not as clear as in Roman law. The custom of enslaving the kin of condemned criminals, who were presumably predominantly male, may well have skewed the servile sex ratio in favour of women, thereby facilitating natural reproduction – in China as in Rome, (male) owners had sexual rights to their slaves. The demographic contribution of abduction, exposure and parental sale of children is necessarily unquantifiable.

We are limited to the impressionistic assessment that while natural reproduction was probably always a major source of slaves, the conversion of free individuals into slaves relied in the first instance on two different mechanisms: capture in war in the Roman world and the seizure of the relatives of condemned criminals in early China. The Chinese system thus favoured internal slave supply over external sources even more strongly than its mature Roman counterpart. More importantly, from an economic perspective this difference made it easier for individual Romans to acquire slaves for their personal use. By contrast, the enslaved kin of criminals came under the control of the state and although rulers are known to have gifted slaves to (usually aristocratic) beneficiaries, the imperial government would have been the foremost consumer of the labour provided by such slaves. The Chinese system was therefore weighted towards state control (either directly through the use of state-owned slaves or indirectly via the allocation of state-owned slaves to the power elite) whereas the Roman system primarily relied on market transactions to make slave labour available to private owners. This is emblematic of a more general difference between state control in China and commercial development in Rome that will be further discussed below.

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[14] Wang 1953: 302–7.
[15] Wang 1953: 314–18, esp. 317.
[16] For Roman slave reproduction, see briefly Scheidel 2011: 306–8.
[17] Wilbur 1943: 126–9; Yates 2002: 288, 308–10.

The Scale of Slavery

The slaves' share in the overall population, were it known, would be a key indicator of the economic importance of unfree labour. The Han and Roman empires ruled a similar number of subjects. In CE 2, a little under 60 million people were registered by the Han authorities, a total that excludes marginal groups such as migrants, convicts and slaves and may have been lowered by less-than-perfect coverage. The actual Han population was probably similar to that of the Roman empire in the first two centuries CE, which may have reached 70 million or more.[18] I have argued elsewhere that very roughly a tenth of the inhabitants of the Roman empire may have been slaves.[19] Corresponding guesses of anywhere from 1 to 50 per cent (!) have been advanced for Han China, with Martin Wilbur's low figure of around 1 per cent having proven the most popular since it was first proposed no fewer than seventy years ago.[20] The foundations of this number are however much shakier than its remarkable resilience suggests. Wilbur arrives at this conjecture by combining a reference to 100,000 state slaves in the 40s BCE with the guesstimate of a half million or so slaves in private hands. This latter figure is based on an abortive decree of 7 BCE that sought to limit slaveownership to 200 slaves for a vassal king, 100 for certain members of the top nobility, and thirty for everybody else.[21] Assuming that the maxima for the first two groups did not greatly exceed actual holdings, he posits some 30,000–50,000 slaves in this category, to which he adds roughly ten times as many again to account for all other slaveowners. The starting assumption appears sound given that a former vassal king was said to own 183 slaves in 67 BCE and a top elite person reportedly received 170 slaves as state gifts over the course of two decades, and is likewise consistent with the fact that even more rhetorically charged statements usually ascribe 100s rather than 1,000s of slaves to the estates of very wealthy individuals. When the emperor Han Wudi confiscated elite slaves, this intervention supposedly yielded 1,000s of slaves and up to 10,000, instead of much larger numbers. All of this points to levels of elite slaveowning that are compatible with Wilbur's estimate. But his conjecture works less well for the

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[18] Bielenstein 1987: 13–14; Scheidel 2007: 48.

[19] Scheidel 2011: 288–92 (15–25 per cent in Italy, 5–10 per cent in Egypt, 7–13 per cent in the empire).

[20] Wilbur 1943: 174–7.

[21] *Hanshu* 24A.8a, in Wilbur 1943: 435–7. Compare comparable restrictions of 300 slaves for nobles and sixty for commoners in Qi in 564 CE (Wang 1953: 311).

lower tiers of Han society: his tally schematically allows for some 25,000 owners of 500,000 slaves, at an average of twenty slaves. This approach raises two problems. One is the neglect of potential slaveownership in the sub-elite population: 25,000 owners would account for not more than 0.2 per cent of all registered households, creating an improbably small elite stratum.[22] If, say, a mere 4 per cent of all 12 million households in the empire on average owned two slaves each this would translate to an additional million slaves overall, almost tripling Wilbur's original guess. The other problem stems from the fact that more recently discovered tombs of lower-level Han officials from Fenghuangshan (Hubei) contain wooden figurines representing slaves meant to serve their owners in the afterlife and inventories listing their duties (on which more below). These finds reveal that an average official could claim to have owned forty or fifty slaves, a startlingly large number. While we cannot tell how realistic or typical this was, it would seem difficult to reconcile these records with Wilbur's conjectures. I conclude that an extremely low figure of the order of 1 per cent is not well supported. A total share of several per cent, and thus a Han-era slave population in the low seven figures, seems more plausible.[23]

Slave Labour

An alternative route to a defensible estimate of slave numbers starts from an assessment of slaves' role in different sectors of the economy. This bottom-up approach, which extrapolates from documented or conjectured demand for slave labour, arguably works reasonably well for Roman Italy but faces more serious obstacles in the case of the Han empire.[24] Given the predominance of the agrarian economy, the presence of slaves in farming is the single most important determinant of the overall size of the slave population. Numbers may be hard to come by even for the core areas of the Roman slave economy but at least the sources, localized or impressionistic

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[22] As Wilbur 1943: 165 notes, Han texts convey the impression that all kinds of people owned slaves, but cautions that they had to be fairly prominent to be mentioned at all: 'Ownership per se was of no special interest to the Han historians except to illustrate the wealth of an individual, his imperial favour, or some other notable matter in which slaves had to be mentioned to make the facts intelligible.'

[23] It is hard to know what to make of the observation that Han texts do not contain specific terms for slave dealers (Wilbur 1943: 122) – does this imply lower levels of commercial specialization or a lower volume of slave trading than in the Roman world?

[24] For Roman Italy, see Scheidel 2011: 289.

as they may be, give us little reason to consider agrarian slave labour a rare or exotic phenomenon.[25]

Conditions in early China are more obscure because only two texts from the Han period explicitly mention slave labour on farms, in each case undertaken by just a single slave, and a third text, from the Northern Dynasties period, likewise refers to agrarian slavery on a very small scale.[26] At the same time, a number of texts imply an association of slaves and agricultural activity by mentioning land and slaves side by side, often in the context of emperors' gifts to elite members.[27] Such texts are hard to understand: they might suggest that fields and slave labour were functionally connected or simply paired those two as 'standard indices of wealth'.[28] Slaves may have accompanied gifts of farm land because they were meant to cultivate it, or perhaps because the land (cultivated by tenants) could be used to support them. This is a more general problem that also occurs in the context of biographies of rich merchants and manufacturers who were said to have owned lots of slaves alongside other resources (see below). More specifically, state decrees against extensive ownership of land and slaves may well 'imply a functional connection'.[29] To Roman historians, this kind of concern will seem familiar and invite a rather specific reading: suffice it to compare

Therefore, [the influential people] multiply their male and female slaves, increase their [herds of] cattle and sheep, enlarge their fields and houses, broaden their fixed property, and accumulate goods. Busily engaged in these pursuits without end, they thereby oppress and trample on the common people. The common people are daily pared down and monthly squeezed, gradually becoming greatly impoverished. (*Hanshu* 56.8b, in Wilbur (1943: 310))

with

For the rich, getting possession of the greater part of the undistributed lands, and being emboldened by the lapse of time to believe that they would never be dispossessed, absorbing any adjacent strips and their poor neighbors' allotments, partly by purchase under persuasion and partly by force, came to cultivate vast tracts instead of single estates, using slaves as laborers and herdsmen, lest free laborers should be drawn from agriculture into the army. At the same time the ownership of

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[25] For Roman slave labour in general, see most recently Bradley 1994: 57–80; Bodel 2011; Harper 2011: 1–200.

[26] Wilbur 1943: 195–6; Wang 1953: 335–6.

[27] Wilbur 1943: 196–203; Wang 1953: 334–5.

[28] Thus Wilbur 1943: 197; but cf. Wang 1953: 335 ('Slaves presented by the court in conjunction with land gifts were obviously intended for farming purposes'). This seems overly confident.

[29] Wilbur 1943: 197.

slaves brought them great gain from the multitude of their progeny, who increased because they were exempt from military service. Thus certain powerful men became extremely rich and the race of slaves multiplied throughout the country, while the Italian people dwindled in numbers and strength, being oppressed by penury, taxes, and military service. If they had any respite from these evils they passed their time in idleness, because the land was held by the rich, who employed slaves instead of freemen as cultivators. (Appian, *Civil Wars* 1.7)

But how exactly was Han elite slaveowning thought to harm the common people? Unlike in Appian's scenario, the Chinese text quoted does not actually specify that slaves displaced free workers; nor do any others. It remains unclear whether slaves were seen as means to acquire greater wealth – equivalent to 'herds' and 'fields' – or rather as a manifestation of wealth – equivalent to 'houses' and 'goods'. The first scenario meshes well with recurrent concerns about the expansion of the power of landlords and their estates that undermined the state's tax base by impoverishing and clientelizing the peasantry.[30] It is also consistent with the sporadic appearance of higher slave numbers under the Eastern Han, when landlords increasingly dominated the scene, than under the Western Han.[31] In the latter scenario, by contrast, slaves might have been a burden for commoners because of the cost of their upkeep, which required growing exactions from tenants and other primary producers who toiled on behalf of the rich.[32] This alternative interpretation is not as far-fetched as it might seem: Han sources do complain about the idleness or unprofitability of state-owned slaves.[33] Han slavery was mostly associated with service functions, and we find references to the use of domestic slaves as status symbols, decked out in expensive garb and numerous far beyond any practical purpose.[34]

Even so, on balance it would seem difficult to view slaves only as a drain on the agrarian assets of the wealthy: if slaves had merely absorbed their owners' resources, why would Han Wudi have confiscated them from antagonistic elite households and why would the decree of 7 BCE have restricted ownership specifically of land and slaves? Further support for a greater

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[30] A standard theme of imperial Chinese history: e.g. Lewis 2007: 21–2, 69–70 (Han); Balazs 1964: 101–25; Deng 1999 (in general).

[31] See Ch'ü 1972: 147, for 800, more than 1,000, 1,000s, and 10,000 slaves held by individual owners; and cf. Wilbur 1943: 169–74 (esp. 170), for the Western Han period, noted above. Needless to say, given the stylized character of all such numerical claims, this observation does not bear much weight. Cf. also below, at n.46.

[32] Considered by Wilbur 1943: 239–40.

[33] Wilbur 1943: 114 with 228; Barbieri-Low 2007: 220.

[34] Wilbur 1943: 195; Wang 1953: 340–1.

productive role of slaves in early Chinese farming is furnished by the afore-
mentioned officials' tombs, according to whose inventories between 25 and
43 per cent of the recorded slaves were engaged in farming, women as field
workers and men as herders, stable hands and field foremen.[35] Although the
literary evidence is indeed highly ambiguous, it therefore seems legitimate
to consider a more expansive scenario of agrarian slavery where 100,000s
of slaves might have worked the fields and tended livestock. Just as in the
Roman case, the key issue here is not whether Chinese slaves ever produced
more than a small portion of all agrarian output – which they surely did
not – but to what extent the ruling class relied on slave labour to produce
the surplus that sustained their elevated status.

This raises the question of slave employment in other sectors of the econ-
omy. It catches the eye that dozens of biographies of rich merchants and
manufacturers do not normally mention slaves as wealth producers.[36] Only
a single entrepreneur is said to have employed his slaves 'in seeking prof-
its from fishing, salt, and trade'. This is presented as if it were noteworthy,
and the same is true of what may point to an arrangement of self-hire for
his slaves.[37] The only other example concerns Zhang Anshi, whose '700
household 'youths' [probably: slaves] were all skilled in manufacturing; he
produced goods and saved up even the minutest things; wherefore he was
able to produce commodities'.[38] Even mining and salt-processing, operations
which lent themselves to the use of unfree labour, are not explicitly linked to
slavery. Western Han sources never associate salt and iron production with
slave labor, and the Eastern Han period merely yields ambiguous references
to an iron manufacturer who owned 800 slaves and gave 100 of them to his
daughter, and to a merchant near the end of the period who was credited with
10,000 slaves and donated 2,000 slaves and 'guests' (a separate status) to his
brother-in-law.[39] Nothing solid can be built on such casual asides. Conversely,
both free migrant labour as well as state-controlled convict labour are

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[35] Barbieri-Low 2007: 253.

[36] Wilbur 1943: 216–20, esp. 217. See also Wang 1953: 339 for the Period of Disunion.

[37] *Hanshu* 91.9a: 'It was said, "Rather to be with Tiao than to have noble rank." This means that
he was able to make strong male slaves self-sufficient [?] while using their energies to the
utmost.' See Ch'ü 1972: 322–4 with 324 n.5.

[38] *Hanshu* 59.5a (*c*.74-62 BC), in Wilbur 1943: 365, and also 218–19.

[39] Wilbur 1943: 218 (Western Han), Ch'ü 1972: 147–8 (Eastern Han), who considers it 'unlikely'
that two iron manufacturers in Sichuan who owned hundreds of slaves did not employ them in
their businesses. Cf. also Barbieri-Low 2007: 251–2 for the Zhou family, which owned 800 or
1,000 slaves and controlled mines, in the absence of an explicit connection between these asset
classes.

expressly mentioned in the context of Han salt and iron production (see below).

The Chinese evidence is just as poor regarding the employment of slaves in positions that entailed autonomy and therefore required reward incentives.[40] From a Roman perspective, it is striking that the existence of a Han equivalent of *peculium* is unclear beyond sporadic references to the self-ransoming of slaves or their retention of gifts, and that there is not much evidence for the use of manumission as a motivational strategy, let alone for the use of freedmen as agents of their former owners.[41]

In view of all this, it would seem like a stretch to conjecture that slave labour in manufacturing and skilled jobs was in fact widespread in early China but merely obscured by a narrow textual tradition that ignored it: although absence of evidence does not equal evidence of absence, the latter cannot readily be read as pervasive neglect by the sources either. On any even moderately conservative reading of the evidence, slave labour – and, by extension, intermediation by freedmen – appears to have been considerably more entrenched in the urban economy of large parts of the Roman world than in that of early China.

Incentive Structures

If slave labour was indeed more common in the Roman world than in early imperial China, what were the reasons? With respect to agriculture, modern scholarship on early China tends to emphasize the generous supply of landless free labour from which landowners could cheaply draw tenants and hired or indentured workers.[42] This, however, was probably also true of much of the Roman world. Real slave prices – expressed in grain equivalent – were very broadly similar in both societies.[43] Patchy fields were common both in the Mediterranean and in China. In Italy under the Roman Republic, conscription and growing urbanization 'thinned' labour markets

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[40]   For a single known case of a slave as business manager under the Western Han, see Wilbur 1943: 184, and cf. Wang 1953: 339 for an owner of mines who had slaves manage them.

[41]   Wilbur 1943: 219–20 (*peculium*), 135–8 (private manumission). Contrast the rich Roman evidence: Mouritsen 2011: 206–47. *Servi vicarii* in China are only known since the Yuan (Mongol) period: Yates 2002: 298.

[42]   E.g. Wilbur 1943: 204–10, 248; Hsu 1980: 63–5, and cf. also Ch'ü 1972: 149.

[43]   Chinese slave prices are scarce: see Yates 2002: 306 (15,000–30,000 cash mostly under the Western Han), Barbieri-Low 2007: 249 (40,000 cash under the Eastern Han). This translates to maybe 3 to 6 tons of wheat, comparable to Roman-era slave prices of 4 tons +/-50 per cent (Scheidel 2008a: 124).

by increasing worker mobility and creating stronger incentives for the purchase of slaves by an elite that benefited from the spoils of empire in the form of growing personal wealth and access to large numbers of war captives and other slave imports.[44] Yet the Warring States period likewise witnessed massive dislocations and mounting pressure on labour resources driven by heavy military and civilian conscription. And indeed, the Qin regime in particular was later condemned – among many other things – for selling slaves like animals in markets, an indication that the slave economy may in fact have grown in that period.[45] Occasional references to the scale of elite slaveownership under the Qin exceed those for the Western Han, but little weight should be put on such snippets.[46]

Rome's greater reliance on slave labour can be traced to two factors, the relative paucity of slaves on the Chinese market and the less privileged position of Chinese wealth elites. In the Warring States period, war captives were turned into forced labourers or drafted into the military instead of being sold off to private bidders as they were in Rome (even though some may have been distributed to members of the military). Whereas Roman elites effectively owned the state and sought to maximize their benefits from it, in the centuries leading up to the completion of the Qin conquests the most successful Chinese states worked hard to contain elite privilege, and Western Han rulers (and then especially Wang Mang) strove to maintain this practice at least up to a point. Both of these processes served to restrict private slave use. Additional contributing factors may be sought in the absence of an equivalent to Mediterranean cash crop production such as viticulture or *pastio villatica*, which were conducive to slave labour, and more generally in lower levels of commercialization in the terrestrial and regionalized environment of early China than in the better interconnected Mediterranean core of the Roman world.[47] The more developed slave economy of the Roman world is best seen as the result of a concatenation of several favourable circumstances such as greater elite autonomy, greater mobility, and greater capital formation in the private sector. I return to this at the end of my chapter.

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[44] For the model, see Scheidel 2008a.

[45] Yates 2002: 288. Both Pulleyblank 1958 and Yates 2002 argue for a sharper demarcation of slave status in this period.

[46] See Ch'ü 1972: 328 for 10,000 slaves owned by a Qin chancellor and 1,000s given to the lover of an empress dowager. The rhetorical character of this is clear: for the same problem, see already above, at n.31.

[47] See for the contrast Adshead 2004: 20–9. For a formal demonstration of the economic importance of Mediterranean connectivity, see now Scheidel 2014.

Forced Labour

The notion that the relative importance of slave labour was associated with different levels of overall economic development is consistent with observed variation in the prevalence of forced labour other than chattel slavery. Conscript and convict labour were generally much more common in early China than in the Roman world. Forced labour certainly existed under Roman rule and given the patchwork character of their empire was more entrenched in some regions than in others: the corvée tradition in Egypt is a good example. Moreover, certain liturgies, especially those related to transport, appear to have been common throughout. Even so, at least in its core regions, the Roman state did not rely on regularized non-military conscript labour at all. Penal labour (*opus publicum*) was primarily a feature of municipal life. Convicts could be compelled to work for fixed terms (durations of one, two to three, and up to ten years are known), performing local services such as road building, clearing of drains, bath-house attendance, or operating treadmills.[48] Such instances of forced labour were grounded in local custom: there is no comparable evidence for the city of Rome itself. Unknown under the Republic, penal servitude under the direct control and for the benefit of the Roman state was narrowly circumscribed under the monarchy: convictions *ad metallum* sent free and slave offenders to mines, quarries and salt-works, generally (or perhaps always) those that were imperial property.[49] In the fourth century CE, female offenders could also be made to work in imperial clothing factories. Just as in early China, convicts lost all their rights, could be put in fetters or tattooed, had their heads shorn, and were effectively treated as slaves (as indicated by the term *servus poenae*, 'slave of the punishment') without being formally reduced to slave status.[50] While the scale of this practice cannot be measured, there is nothing to indicate that it was of more than rather limited economic significance or indeed that the economic use of convicts was the state's primary motivation for condemning them.[51]

This was a far cry from the crucial role of both conscript and penal labour in early China.[52] In the Qin and Han empires, most of the adult civilian

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[48] Millar 1984: 132–7 is the best survey.

[49] Millar 1984: 137–43.

[50] Millar 1984: 138; Burdon 1988: 73–81. See also above.

[51] Thus Millar 1984: 146; Burdon 1988: 82.

[52] Lewis 2007: 250 maintains that '[f]orced labor was the foundation of the Qin and Han states'. Yates 2002: 315 thinks that use of forced labour 'may have been one of the decisive factors' in Qin's success. Forced labour was already important in the Shang period: Yates 2002: 301, drawing on David Keightley's work.

population was required to perform corvée labour for the state, usually one month per year.[53] Depending on period and rank, service obligations started at age fifteen to seventeen or twenty to twenty-four and ceased at anywhere from age fifty-six to sixty-six. Not all those liable were actually called up at any given time in order to keep mobilization from interfering with essential agricultural tasks. Most work was performed locally, on dams and dikes and roads and in the transportation of tax in kind. However, conscripts were sometimes dispatched to participate in projects at the imperial centre: the most famous example involves some 145,000 conscripts who built part of the walls of Chang'an in the 190s BCE.[54] Artisans likewise faced conscription, their special skills exempting the remainder of their households from service.[55]

Vast numbers of crimes carried a sentence of penal servitude, which ranged in length from one month to six years, with terms of one to five years being the most common.[56] In the Qin period, war captives could also be assimilated to the status of convict labourers.[57] Convicts 'built palaces, dug tombs, shored up dikes, built roads and bridges, cut fodder for horses, harvested timber, transported tax grain, mined copper and iron ore, cast iron tools, minted coins, boiled brine into salt, and dyed fabric'.[58] Put at the disposal of the state for longer periods of time and without regard for their personal circumstances or welfare, they were often transferred over long distances and operated in large groups. Numbers range from an estimated 10,000 to 50,000 convicts employed in the Western Han iron industry to over 100,000 convicts, slaves and officials used for mining and smelting in the same period and 700,000 convicts and slaves who built the palace of the First Emperor.[59] The enormous scale of convict labour for the central government and the brutal treatment that workers were subjected to are best documented by archaeological evidence for the construction of various Han imperial tombs. Huge adjacent cemeteries contain many thousands of neatly interred bodies, mostly men aged 20 to 40, often with iron collars

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[53] See Barbieri-Low 2007: 214–15 for a summary that takes account of the most recent discoveries.

[54] See Barbieri-Low 2007: 220–3 for a detailed discussion: conscripts were drawn in from a 250km radius for one month in February/March when there was little farm labour to be done.

[55] Barbieri-Low 2007: 224.

[56] Wilbur 1943: 41; Barbieri-Low 2007: 228–9. By the Eastern Han period, some 600 crimes were punishable by death but even more led to penal servitude. Certain crimes could be redeemed by paying a fine instead of performing labour service: Yates 2002: 307–8.

[57] Yates 2002: 313.

[58] Barbieri-Low 2007: 232. See also Yates 2002: 304.

[59] Barbieri-Low 2007: 220, 234, 237.

and leg fetters and sometimes crude epitaphs that specify their names, origins and penalties. In keeping with textual evidence, these finds suggest that many convicts perished before their terms were completed.[60]

Han authorities employed a two-tier model that matched different types of forced labour to different types of tasks: while conscripts were normally used locally and for short periods in tasks that at least partly benefited the local population, convicts were exploited in the hardest jobs. This arrangement minimized the impact of corvée obligations on private productive activity such as farming (and thus on primary producers' ability to render tribute) and resentment among ordinary commoners.[61] When military conscription was abolished early under the Eastern Han dynasty, the use of convicts greatly expanded in the military sphere as well, as many were drafted for garrison duty at the frontiers. One source mentions no fewer than 2,000 prisons in this period that fed the forced labour system.[62]

Convict labour provided early Chinese states with the kind of highly fungible and mobile labour force that in the Roman world was made up of slaves. The least desirable tasks could readily be devolved upon them: in contrast to the Roman world, no slave revolts are reported in early China; instead, it was Han convicts who at times rose in considerable force.[63] However, unlike in the Roman world, where this type of labour was often used in the private sector, in early China it was the central government that depended on it for the performance of vital state-related operations and infrastructure projects. The Roman practice of convictions *ad metallum* was only a pale shadow of the much more extensive gulag-like Chinese system of penal servitude. The Roman state relied more on the labour market for the completion of public works. Even when in late antiquity the Roman empire began to operate *fabricae* to manufacture arms for the military, the workers were generally free persons ranked as soldiers whereas the more numerous Qin and Han establishments that produced not only weaponry but also tools and luxury items employed convicts alongside free workers.[64]

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[60] Barbieri-Low 2007: 236–42. The cemeteries imply average fatality rates of several men per day.
[61] Barbieri-Low 2007: 245.
[62] Lewis 2007: 248–50.
[63] Wilbur 1943: 224–5, 242; Barbieri-Low 2007: 227, 241–5. Wilbur 1943: 242 notes the absence of references to callous treatment of Han slaves, in obvious contrast to the Roman tradition.
[64] Jones 1964: 834–5 (35 *fabricae*); Barbieri-Low 2007: 253–4 (over 100 Chinese factories). Only late Roman weaving mills employed (female) convicts and state slaves (Jones 1964: 836).

State Power and Economic Development

The only exception to these divergent practices concerns imperial administration. Both the Han and Roman authorities heavily drew on state slaves to assist in governmental functions. The *familia Caesaris* was vital in managing the affairs of the emperor well beyond the imperial household. One source ascribes 100,000 slaves to the Han state of the mid-first century BCE, a number that is suspiciously round, impossible to verify, and may well be (much?) too high.[65] Wilbur conjectures that lifetime service was well suited to skilled labour and that state slaves may therefore have been concentrated in services and knowledge-rich functions, a notion that chimes with criticisms of their supposed idleness and profit-seeking. Unlike convicts, many of them may have been servants, clerks and accountants rather than manual labourers.[66] At the same time, the Warring States and Han empire employed large numbers of free salaried men to staff government offices, whereas in the Roman empire these functions were largely devolved upon locally autonomous elites and the municipal officials recruited from amongst them. It was only in late antiquity that the Roman state began to adopt a Han-style model of low-paid free clerks.[67]

The greatest overlap between the two societies thus occurred in the sphere of central administration, where slaves were employed in considerable numbers and the free salaried workforce expanded in the later Roman empire.[68] Although conscript and convict labour were by no means unknown in the Roman world, they were much more widespread in early China. Forced labour is arguably more typical of less developed economies in which the state cannot rely on markets to get difficult jobs done. Chattel slavery can be seen as a way to obtain new resources with the help of 'outside' labour without challenging entrenched societal arrangements.[69] In early China, both the creation of 'outsiders' from within the in-group (in

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[65] *Hanshu* 72.7a in Wilbur 1943: 397, with 114, 176 (viewed as an exaggeration). Cf. the suspiciously similar complaint about the presence of over 100,000 convicts, conscripts and officials involved in mining and smelting in the same memorial (*Hanshu* 72.13a-b, with Barbieri-Low 2007: 220). When Han Wudi seized 1,000s of slaves of the rich, the state bureaux absorbed them only with difficulty (Wilbur 1943: 114), which points to a total much more modest than 100,000 overall. The reference to 30,000 state-owned ranching slaves is likewise unverifiable (Wilbur 1943: 115).

[66] Wilbur 1943: 227–8, 231. There is no evidence of their use in farming even when both land and slaves were confiscated (233–4). In one instance, state slaves manufactured model farm tools for demonstration purposes (234).

[67] See Eich 2015 and Zhao 2015 for the contrast between the two systems.

[68] Scheidel 2015.

[69] Miller 2012: 36–72.

the form of convicts) and the mobilization of conscript labour (facilitated perhaps by an ideology of familial duty or the peasantry's rationalization of economic necessity[70]) may have posed less of a challenge than in the citizen-centred and locally autonomous communities of the Greco-Roman Mediterranean.[71]

This sketch of divergent state strategies aligns well with the notion of unequal economic development as indicated by different levels of slave use in the private sector, discussed above. Both fit into a scenario of stronger economic development in ancient Rome than in early imperial China.[72] This, in turn, is consistent with Ian Morris' estimate that key indices of social development in China did not reach Roman levels until the Song period, almost 1,000 years later, when commercial growth took off on an unprecedented scale.[73] The study of the 'location' and relative significance of slavery and forced labour in early China and the Roman world thus contributes to a larger effort to track and make sense of economic development in the long run.

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[70]   Wilbur's conjectures (1943: 247).

[71]   For a more expansive view, see Scheidel (forthcoming).

[72]   Cf. my earlier argument in favour of greater monetary development in the Roman empire compared to Han China: Scheidel 2009b: 199–206.

[73]   Morris (2013: 240–3).

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Cultural Legacies of Eurasian Empires

7 | Homer and the Shi Jing as Imperial Texts

ALEXANDER BEECROFT

Introduction

Much has been said about the potential dating of Homeric epic, from efforts to uncover Mycenean aspects of the text which may pre-date the Trojan War itself, through theories of orality, transcription, compilation and circulation, with dates from the eighth century onwards, through questions about textual variation in the manuscript tradition, questions which run through the final centuries BCE. The great anthology of early Chinese poetry, the *Shi Jing*, or *Canon of Songs*, may on the surface have a less controversial textual history, with many scholars assuming an original (and admittedly broad) era of composition for most of the poems running from roughly 1000 BCE to roughly 600 BCE – but recent linguistic scholarship has disrupted this consensus, and tends to suggests later dates, with answers ranging from the eighth to the fourth centuries BCE. Moreover, these are dates for the individual poems themselves; the dating of the anthology (traditionally attributed to Confucius, 551–479 BCE) is another question entirely. New archaeological finds show that a version of the anthology reasonably similar to our own existed in the mid-fourth century BCE, but such finds also suggest a fluidity in the structure, let alone the interpretation, of the collection which remained significant through the Western Han (206 BC–9 CE), and even into the Eastern Han (25–220 CE).

I turn to the details of these questions later in this chapter, and explore briefly the various challenges associated with any attempt to date either text (that is, to come up with a theory for the production and circulation of that text, and to tie that theory to a particular historical moment). Before doing so, however, I would like to pause for a moment on the interesting fact that some measure of fluidity (more consequential, perhaps, in the Chinese case than in the Greek) remained in the text of both Homeric epic and the *Shi Jing* down to at least the end of the first millennium BCE, well after both texts had achieved hyper-canonical status within their traditions, and probably more than a thousand years after their earliest elements began to be composed. In a metaphor found in scholarship in both traditions, these

texts are 'sedimented'[1] or 'crystallized',[2] accreted over time as they grew from small kernels of text into the much larger structures known today.

In other words, asking the question 'How old is Homeric epic?' or 'How old is the *Shi Jing*?' requires first deciding what you are trying to date – those earliest grains, or the final fixed text taking the form we know today, or something in between? An honest appraisal would suggest, I think, that both Homeric epic and the poems of the *Shi Jing* existed in multiple historical incarnations. Epic formulaic language and themes undoubtedly circulated long before the Trojan War became the overarching theme of their content; shorter versions of specific episodes may have been sung independently of the larger narrative; different oral poets may have performed different *Iliads* before different audiences; different cities may even have treasured different manuscripts of the epic, with minor differences, until a very late date. Similarly, the habit of producing songs and hymns in the style of *Shi Jing* poems may be very old in China, but there must have been a gradual transition from a large and diverse repertoire of poems whose texts were themselves open to variation, through an emergent sense of a corpus of poems that were particularly prized, to the gradual appearance of a fixed collection of about 300 poems, organized in a particular way to represent a particular vision of Chinese geography and history, a collection of poems which was finally fixed in the amber, as it were, of a canonical commentarial tradition.

Each of these incarnations, I would argue, needs to be seen as ontologically distinct from the others, even if the boundaries between them are necessarily blurry. The Trojan War narrative known to Sappho as she sings of the wedding of Hector and Andromache is not necessarily the *Iliad* Xenophanes mocks, or the one Pindar seeks to rival, still less the poem Plato's Socrates seeks to banish from his abstract city, or that Alexander the Great slept with beneath his pillow – or that Trimalchio butchers in his retelling in Petronius' *Satyricon*. Similarly, the *shi*, or poems, possibly sung by early Chinese men and women as they went about their daily lives, or by members of the Zhou royal house as they worshipped their ancestors, are in a meaningful sense not the corpus of well-known poetic lines wittily quoted by regional-state diplomats in the *Zuozhuan*, or cited polemically in anecdotes about Confucius. Still less are any of these things the same as the poems studied alongside their commentaries by millennia of elite men across East Asia. Rather than try to date 'Homeric epic', or 'the *Shi Jing*', in

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[1]   See e.g. Nylan 2001: 220, 258–9.
[2]   Nagy 1996: 108–9.

other words, an act which assumes that there is some one object among all of these which has ontological priority and of which the others are merely earlier precursors or later refinements, we should, perhaps, be trying to date these different objects, and to account for their production, circulation and meaning in different terms.

That is what this chapter proposes to do, at least in part, with respect to relatively late incarnations of both corpuses. In what follows, I examine Homeric epic and the *Shi Jing* as artefacts of imperial regimes: the successor kingdoms to Alexander the Great in the former case; the two Han dynasties in the latter. I open with a brief survey of attempts to date both traditions, since I believe it is important to remember what we do and do not know about these questions, and to underscore the speculative nature of much of what we say about the earlier iterations of these traditions. My emphasis, however, is on the comparatively late iterations of both texts – the emergence of something like critical editions of Homeric epic in the Hellenistic capitals, complete with queries against dubious lines; and the consolidation of the Mao commentarial tradition of the *Shi Jing* under the Han. Both of these iterations create something new within their traditions: highly stable textual artefacts, whose stability is reinforced through apparatuses of textual criticism and commentary which both frame the 'original' text and become an indispensable part of it. Through the incorporation of commentary, and of the notion of an invariable text, centuries of fluidity are finally and definitively halted, and new and potent sources of cultural capital are created.

Attempts at Dating Homeric Epic

First, a brief examination of some of the dates offered for the composition of Homeric epic by scholars in the field today. As can be seen below, the dates they offer range considerably:

1. Barry Powell: Homer's floruit falls 800–750 BCE, arguing that the Greek alphabet was developed for the transcription of hexameter verse, and probably specifically for Homeric epic.[3]
2. Richard Janko: 775–750 BCE for the *Iliad*, slightly later for the *Odyssey*, based on an analysis of linguistic change.[4]

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[3] Powell 1996: 221.
[4] Janko 1998: 1.

3. Joachim Latacz: 750–700 BCE for both poems – an era he identifies as one of great material and intellectual progress, spurring on creativity.[5]
4. Stephanie West: seventh century BCE, with the *Iliad* perhaps a generation older than the *Odyssey*. Stephanie West suggests that the *Odyssey*, in particular, shows an awareness of the revival of Egyptian Thebes under the Twenty-fifth Dynasty (715–663 BCE), and assumes that writing must have existed for some time before it was deployed for the transcription of a long memorized oral poem.[6]
5. Martin West: *Iliad* c. 650 BCE; *Odyssey* c. 610 BCE. Martin West constructs an elaborate schema for the history of all the major poetic texts of archaic Greece, tracing what he believes to be the intertextual borrowings between them, as well as their awareness of each other and of outside events.[7]
6. Gregory Nagy: Nagy draws in particular on comparative evidence from other cultures (such as the South Slavic) where long oral epics were composed in performance. He offers a more complex theory, with 'Five Ages of Homer'. In this theory, the oral versions of the epics take shape between the mid-eighth and mid-sixth centuries BCE, but there are no written texts at all before Athens in the mid-sixth century, and which sees the Athens of Demetrius of Phalerum (c. 317–307 BCE) as the decisive moment of the transformation of transcripts into scripts.[8]

It should be noted that not only do these scholars differ by several centuries in the dates they assign to the epics, but their theories also construct very different understandings of those epics. Latacz's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are products of a newly confident aristocratic culture of the eighth century and of the beginnings of colonization. Powell's slightly earlier epics inspire the creation of the alphabet, while Stephanie West's, composed in the aftermath of increased contact with Egypt, adapt writing only after that technology has had a few centuries to mature. Nagy's Five Ages each produce very different kinds of epic, from amorphous oral traditions to, eventually, fixed written texts, each emerging in a quite distinctive cultural context.

Against the backdrop of these various theories, it is worth remembering that as of now our oldest manuscript traditions for Homeric epic are scattered papyrus fragments from Egypt and Nubia dating to the third century BCE; many of the papyri of the second, and even the first,

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[5] Latacz 1996: 59.
[6] West 1990.
[7] West 2011.
[8] Nagy 1996: 110.

centuries BCE contain plus-verses and minus-verses;[9] that is, they either include lines not found in the medieval manuscript tradition, or omit lines included in it. None of these so-called 'wild papyri' contain radically different plot points or other extreme departures from the text as we know it today, but they do speak to a certain measure of fluidity in the transmission of the text until quite astonishingly late. Nagy's model, of course, depends crucially on the existence of the wild papyri to demonstrate that the text continued its life in oral form up to and beyond the classical period, even if it must make much of the relatively minor divergences in the papyri. Other models, which assume a fixed text by at least c. 600 BCE, and sometimes much earlier, must instead account for how the manuscript tradition grew so corrupt over time (possibly for as long as six hundred years) – before returning to a stable and unitary standard later, a standard which may or may not have matched the original fixed text, and which took place because of some unspecified process. Neither alternative, of course, is entirely satisfactory, nor does either convince partisans of the other point of view. We find quotations from Homer in fifth-century texts and especially in Plato, though again Plato's Homer is often not precisely equivalent to the Homer of the medieval manuscript tradition, in ways that are often quietly edited out of modern editions of Plato.[10] Alexandrian scholarship (as reflected in the later scholia) offered an abundance of commentary on the suitability or otherwise of many Homeric lines, including, occasionally, lines not found in our editions, but opinions vary as to the influence these scholars had on the later tradition.[11]

The earliest concrete evidence for the text of Homer, then, is as ambiguous as the extra-textual clues used to divine a date for Homeric epic. Textual evidence testifies to a certain level of textual fluidity until the first century BCE, and no single date can accommodate all of the conflicting signals afforded us by the sprawling and inconsistent textual transmissions of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Obviously, at some point the fluidity stops altogether, and textual variations can be understood as simply 'errors', but the date at which that is possible is late indeed, and in the meantime virtually any attempt to fix the date of composition of 'our' epics needs to assert as fact things which are merely assumptions of the author's model.

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[9] Haslam 1997.

[10] Still important here is Labarbe, *L'Homère de Platon* (Larbarbe 1949).

[11] For the view that the Alexandrians greatly influenced our manuscript tradition of Homer, see Bolling 1925. For the opposing position, see Allen 1924.

Attempts to Date the *Shi Jing*

Dates for the *Shi Jing* vary at least as widely as those for Homeric epic. The most commonly found dates, at least in Western scholarship, are those offered by W.A.C.H. Dobson, who uses linguistic evidence to suggest that the poems of the *Shi Jing* were composed between about 1000 and about 600 BCE.[12] These dates, which accord reasonably well with the notional dates of composition supplied by the commentaries, became ubiquitous enough to be repeated without citation or comment, as, for example, in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographic Guide*.[13] In my own earlier work, I also relied on those dates uncritically. Edward Shaughnessy, among others, continues to believe that the earliest poems in the *Shi Jing* were composed when the tradition says they were – at the founding of the Western Zhou, in the eleventh century BCE.[14]

But recent linguistic scholarship has begun to challenge the claim that the *Songs* themselves are as old as we used to think they are. Kai Vogelsang[15] and Wolfgang Behr,[16] for example, have examined the corpus of bronze inscriptions (now larger than it was in Dobson's day, of course), in much more detail than Dobson did, and have offered persuasive linguistic arguments to suggest that the poems we have may date more plausibly to the eighth and seventh centuries BCE – to an era in which the Eastern Zhou, much humbler cousin to its Western predecessor, may have been interested in constructing a new memory of dynastic origins. William H. Baxter emphasizes the challenges of dating the poems of the *Shi Jing* since their redaction in the Han era has in many cases distorted what might have been the original meaning of the text; in his words, we are left with a 'Zhou text in Han clothing'.[17] In a more extreme vein, Bruce and Taeko Brooks suggest that there is little evidence that many of the poems of the *Shi Jing* predate the late fourth century BCE.[18] Other scholars, however, examine the same sorts of evidence, reaching quite different conclusions. Chen Zhi, for example, in his own comparison of the language of bronze inscriptions and that of the *Shi Jing*, dates the earliest layers of the anthology to the late tenth century and the reign of King Mu (922–900 BCE), a century or two before

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[12] Dobson 1964.
[13] Loewe 1993.
[14] Shaughnessy 1997: 165–6.
[15] Vogelsang 2004.
[16] Behr 2017.
[17] Baxter 1991: 30.
[18] Brooks and Brooks 2015: 42.

Behr and Vogelsang,[19] and Luo Jiangwen, in his own assessment of the relationship between the language of bronze inscriptions and that of the *Shi Jing*, finds the traditional dates still quite convincing.[20]

Songs of Empire, I: the *Shi Jing*

It is thus very difficult to come up with dates for either the *Shi Jing* or for Homeric epic which fit all the available evidence, and which also satisfy the full range of scholars working in these respective fields, and the dates we choose for these texts are arguably mostly a function of the theory we have for their composition and circulation (theories for which, it must be said, the evidence is mostly indirect). Much of the difficulty, in each case, springs from the fact that the earliest direct evidence we have for both corpuses, whether through chance manuscript survivals or through citations in other texts, date from long after the dates at which we assume the corpuses existed in something like their current forms. Herodotus discusses Homeric epic, for example, in the mid-fifth century BCE, and papyrus fragments from the third century onwards are reasonably abundant, but all scholars working on Homeric epic assume that the poems existed in recognizable form at least a century or two before Herodotus, and possibly much more. Likewise, quotations and archaeological manuscripts allow us to be certain that at least some of the poems of the *Shi Jing* existed in the fourth century BCE, but virtually all scholars assume the poems of the collection are at least a couple of centuries older than that.

The related problem, which I have alluded to earlier, is that assumptions about dating tend to rely on the unspoken notion that each of these corpuses is in fact a single ontological entity, unchanging in its essence throughout time, rather than a contingent and shifting assemblage. Put another way, there seem clearly to have been *Iliads* (one or many of them at a time) in every century from say the eighth century BCE onwards, but their natures clearly shifted over time, in both cases from orality towards writing, and from free-form collections of smaller blocks of text into fixed and canonical sequences. Nagy's 'Five Ages of Homer' acknowledges this explicitly, but I would argue that the other models of Homeric epic, together with those of the *Shi Jing*, likewise actually describe the process by which their objects of study transform, rather than the date at which they are created. Necessarily,

[19] Chen 2010.
[20] Luo and Yu 2001.

earlier stages, for which there is no written evidence, are more speculative, and so in the space remaining I would like to sketch out briefly what it might mean to think about the *Shi Jing* and Homeric epic specifically in their incarnations as products of empire. To do so is not to claim that the texts did not exist before this era, but rather that we can and should speak meaningfully about the significance of these texts as cultural objects and practices rooted in specific times and places.

Even if we tentatively incline towards the eighth and seventh centuries dates for the earliest of the poems in the *Shi Jing*, we are nonetheless far from dating all of the individual poems in the anthology (some of which are certainly later than others), still less to having any sense of when and how the anthology itself came into being. Archaeology is beginning to help with the last point, with texts such as 'Confucius' Discussion of the Poetry' (*Kongzi Shilun*), dating probably to shortly before 300 BCE, providing important clues.[21] This text, reassembled from bamboo strips excavated from an unknown tomb, and purchased on the antiquities market in Hong Kong by the Shanghai Museum, refers (more or less) to the four divisions of the *Shi Jing* as we know them, and the poems included in it seem (with one or two debatable cases) all to be found in our anthology as well. Nonetheless, there seem to be key differences between the collection of poems known to the author of this text and our anthology: while there is a section of 'Airs of the States' (here called the *Bangfeng* rather than the *Guofeng* prior to a taboo on the personal name of the first emperor of the Han Dynasty), it does not seem to be broken down into sections by state as our anthology is; moreover, certain groups of poems are consistently referred to in the same sequences, using sequences which do not correspond to the order of our own text.[22] Other recent discoveries, such as the Tsinghua University bamboo strips (still incompletely known by the larger scholarly world),[23] probably dating from the fourth century BCE as well, contain not only new poems previously unknown, but also situate those poems within a historical anecdote in very much the way that the *Zuozhuan* itself does. Even if the late fourth century knew an anthology much like our own, finds such as these (which may, who knows, be augmented in the future), complicate the notion that that anthology had achieved anything like the canonical status it would later enjoy. Certainly, the Mao edition of the *Songs* dates to somewhere around 150 BCE; the three other 'schools' of interpretation long

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[21] Kern 2008: 30.

[22] Staack 2010.

[23] See the preliminary discussion at Chen 2009.

known (Qi, Lu, Han), may well have used very similar texts for the poems (transcribed differently in places), but it is clear that the interpretation of the individual poems, and therefore the significance of the anthology as a whole, would remain uncertain for longer still.[24]

We are uncertain as to exactly when the Mao commentarial tradition as we know it became entirely orthodox. This development used to be linked to the reign of Han Wudi (r. 141–87 BCE), but more recent work has suggested that even later dates, such as the reign of the usurper Wang Mang (9–25 CE) or of the Eastern Han itself, might be more appropriate.[25] In any case, the emergence of the Mao tradition, with its rigid and politicizing reading of even the most folkloric-seeming of the poems, seems certainly linked to the desires of an imperial regime to refine its self-presentation. The received tradition is that the early Western Han sought to establish an ideology of rule distinct from the harsh Legalism which its predecessor the Qin (221–207 BCE) had favoured. Qin Legalism was known for its harsh systems of punishment, for the burning of all books not consistent with state ideology, and even for the live burial of over 400 'Confucian' officials who refused to act in accord with its dictates. Recent scholars are rightly sceptical of this traditional narrative, pointing out that texts such as the Confucian classics seem to have survived much more readily than one would expect given such events.[26] That notwithstanding, the era of Han Wudi does seem to have been interested in identifying the Qin with Legalism (as especially in Sima Qian' history, written in this era), and perhaps in promoting an alternative ideology such as 'Confucianism'. Certainly, at this time, efforts were made to provide imperial sponsorship for the study of classical texts. Change, however, was slow: many key Confucian texts, such as the *Analects,* were still taking shape in this time,[27] and the *ru*, the class of scholar-officials later associated with Confucian thought, were as much associated with the practice of ritual and of magic as with textual criticism and the ethics of administration.[28]

More recently, the emphasis has been instead on the era of the usurper Wang Mang (r. 9–23 CE), and the early Eastern Han era following it, as the *locus classicus* for the establishment of a 'Confucian' orthodoxy as the ideology of state, and the consequent production of the *Shi Jing* that we know in later times, fixed in text and embedded within an extensive commentary.

[24] Kern 2010, http://cat.inist.fr/?aModele=afficheN&cpsidt=19188332.
[25] Wang 2001; Fukui 2005; Lagerwey and Kalinowski,2009.
[26] Nylan 2001: 29–30.
[27] Hunter 2012.
[28] Zufferey 2003.

Wang allegedly learned the Confucian texts himself, seized power from the Western Han during a moment when the inheritance was unclear, and established himself as founder of the 'New' (*Xin*) dynasty. Wang may have felt the need to legitimate[29] this radical move, and certainly identified himself with the Duke of Zhou, brother to the founder of the Zhou Dynasty, and regent while his nephew Kang was too young to rule.[30] This appropriation of the figure of the Duke of Zhou must surely have contributed to his increasing significance within Confucian thought. More generally, Wang's regime (and indirectly the Eastern Han following him) made use of the systematic classification of the textual tradition by the imperial bibliographers Liu Xiang (77–6 BCE) and his son Liu Xin (50 BC–23 CE), who definitively established the limits and status of the Confucian classics, including the *Shi Jing*.

The commentary in which our *Shi Jing* is embedded likewise emerges only gradually. We are told of four Western Han traditions of commentary on the *Songs*: the Lu, Qi, Han and Mao. The first three are established canonically under Han Wudi, who creates chairs for the study of each of these three texts and commentaries on the *Songs*. From the fragments we have of the three, together with the chance survivals of other interpretive traditions, we can see that a wide range of readings of the poems circulated in the Western Han. The fourth 'school' of *Shi Jing* interpretation, the Mao school, was not officially enshrined until the reign of Han Pingdi (1 BCE–CE 6) – the child emperor whose regent was Wang Mang himself.[31] This Mao interpretation claims to date to Confucius' own disciples, giving it a specious aura of authority in an era with little direct textual transmission from the age of Confucius. In turn, Zheng Xuan (127–200 CE), an influential scholar operating in the era of the Eastern Han's decline and collapse, relied heavily on the Mao interpretations to construct his own layer of commentary. This did not become canonical in his lifetime, but was in turn the basis for the edition of the *Shi Jing* used by Kong Yingda (574–648 CE) in his definitive edition (with still more commentary) of the classics, which has remained the basis of canonical editions ever since, not to mention of the traditional Chinese system of education. Kong's work was undertaken

[29]   *Pace* Pollock 2009: 516–24, who argues that pre-modern rulers did not seek to 'legitimize' their rule, in a Weberian sense, since the notion that a single man should rule with absolute power went unquestioned in nearly all premodern societies. Leaving aside the exceptions (such as Greek democracy and oligarchy), it seems to me that usurpers and founders of dynasties are a special category of pre-modern figures who need precisely to 'legitimate' their rule – if not in the absolute, then at least in opposition to their predecessors.

[30]   Loewe 2012: 13.

[31]   Kern 2010: 21.

in 637–42 CE at the behest of Tang Taizong (r. 626–649 CE), the founding ruler of the Tang dynasty, who evidently sought to consolidate his own position as ruler of a new dynasty by promulgating a definitive edition of the classics, linking himself thereby to both the Han and the more distant Zhou.

The *Shi Jing* (and the other classics) must thus be understood as palimpsests, edited and reframed continually over a period of centuries, and reflecting (among other things) the political ambitions of the age of Han Wudi, of Wang Mang, of the late Eastern Han and of the early Tang. Indeed, so overwritten has the text become that it is all but impossible to restore something like an original meaning to the text. The glosses and commentaries provided by all these layers of imperial ambition are frequently dubious and sometimes outright absurd (as we shall see in a moment), but to strip them away and to attempt to imagine what an 'original' text might look like is all but impossible. New archaeological finds do at last give us the opportunity to see how early readers not burdened with our commentaries read these poems, in patches here and there. This newfound ability to glimpse something like an original version of the *Shi Jing* is salutary, indeed exciting, and I am grateful for these new opportunities.[32] But the gradual emergence through archaeology of older layers of the *Shi Jing* should also, I hope, allow us to focus with renewed vigor on the monumental interpretive work performed on the *Songs*, and the other classics, by centuries of empire.

Songs of Empire, II: Homer

I have begun with the *Shi Jing* because the case for that text as a product of empire is much more straightforward than that for Homeric epic. Homer's poems were originally enjoyed in the world of the Greek polis, which, whether democratic, oligarchic or monarchical, was far from imperial in its scope. By the time the Greeks were an imperial people, in the aftermath of Alexander, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were fixed in a way that the *Shi Jing* had not yet been. While Hellenistic papyri of the Homeric poems frequently include plus- or minus-verses, and other textual variations, none of these textual differences (that we know of to date at least) seem to make a very consequential difference to the grand arcs of the plots of the two epics.

In part, this is of course a function of the fact that Homeric epic, unlike the *Shi Jing*, has plot. Where the Chinese anthology is a collection of short

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[32] Kern 2008.

poems, most of which could be called lyrical and imagistic (foregrounding the selection, organization, and interpretation of the individual poems as an aesthetic act independent of their composition), Homeric epics are long texts, with occasional episodic digressions but are otherwise narratively coherent. As a result, questions of selection and interpretation are necessarily less salient, and ancient scholarly work itself emphasized getting the text right. The nature of the evidence available to us is different in Greece as well, and that has an impact on how we understand the question.

We know that a number of scholars in the Hellenistic era compiled their own texts of the Homeric epics: Zenodotus (fl. 280 BCE), Aristophanes of Byzantium (c. 257-c.180 BCE) and Aristarchus of Samothrace (c. 220-c.143 BCE) at the Library of Alexandria, Crates of Mallos (fl. second century BCE) in Pergamon, and almost certainly others in Antioch and in the Macedonian capital of Pella. None of these 'editions' (if we may call them that) survive in their own right, however – what survives are mediaeval manuscripts with marginal notations (*scholia*) containing a variety of information, including alternative readings found in these Hellenistic texts of the poem, as well as a range of critical and aesthetic commentary, as well as supplementary information aiding in the interpretation of the text. Some of the most extensive and valuable scholia come from the so-called Venetus A manuscript of the *Iliad* (preserved in the Bibliotheca Marciana in Venice), while others are found on other manuscripts of the *Iliad*, as well as of the *Odyssey*, including on the papyri of both which continue to be discovered and published.[33] Of these thousands of scholia, only a small percentage have been published to date,[34] including most of the so-called 'A scholia' from the Venetus A manuscript, and very little else.

Compared with the case of the *Shi Jing*, our state of knowledge is very different, even though in both traditions we know that the main text of our poems was mostly encountered within a frame of commentary. In the case of the Chinese anthology we have one very complete and extensive school of commentary, along with tiny fragments of other schools, preserved by accident – enough to show us that orthodox readings were not the only ones found in ancient times, but far from enough to develop a coherent sense of how other interpretations worked. We are thus to some extent prisoners of the Mao school of interpretation, profoundly sceptical of its readings of many poems, and yet not always having access to anything else. In the case of Homeric epic, we have a vast body of commentarial material

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[33]　For a fuller discussion, see Dickey 2007: 18–23.

[34]　Most importantly, in Erbse 1969.

in the scholia, which represents the views of a wide range of scholars, but because that body of commentary was never standardized and organized in the way that it was in China, it is difficult to navigate and is consulted much less frequently than it could be.

Be that as it may, the evidence we have suggests that rival Hellenistic kingdoms saw ownership of their own versions of the Homeric epics as an important aspect of the Hellenic cultural capital they sought to accumulate and display. For the Macedonian rulers (who were from the periphery of the classical Greek world) of these Hellenistic realms, with their capitals (Alexandria, Pergamon, Antioch, Pella) far from previous Greek cultural centres such as Athens, libraries and the scholarship that went with them, provided an important means of doing so. We are told (though sources conflict) that the library at Alexandria began to build its collection with the personal library of Aristotle himself (Athenaeus 1.3.a–b), as well as with editions of the great tragedians meticulously re-copied from their Athenian originals. Pointedly, we are told that the body of Alexander the Great was buried in the same complex (Strabo 17.1.8), while the Librarian doubled as tutor to the royal children,[35] consolidating the links between cultural prestige and political power. Pergamon and Alexandria engaged in a notorious battle for library supremacy: anecdotes of varying reliability tell us that Alexandria blocked the export of papyrus and imprisoned Aristophanes of Byzantium in order to hinder the development of the Pergamene library, and that the latter city, unable to purchase the legacy of Aristotle, was forced to hire Crates of Mallos, a Stoic, instead. More limited evidence suggests that Antioch and Pella were as obsessed with the cultural prestige they could acquire through their curatorship of the classical tradition.[36]

It is a curious fact that, in spite of this intensive political competition for cultural capital, and even though Alexandria is perceived as having won these battles in the ancient context, that the received text of the Homeric epics in fact shows little influence from the editorial work of the Alexandrian scholars: for the most part, their deletions and emendations of the text seem to have had little impact on the long-term textual history of the epics. Margalit Finkelberg has suggested, compellingly, that this may be because our manuscript tradition derives not from Alexandria *per se*, but from Constantinople, and from the Byzantine era, when our manuscripts were after all compiled. Drawing in part on the parallel recension history of the Bible, Finkelberg suggests that Constantinople may have been linked

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[35] Finkelberg 2010: 231.
[36] Finkelberg 2010: 236–8.

more closely to Antioch than to Alexandria in its book trade. When the Greek world came under a unified cultural centre for the very first time in the fourth century CE, the new political order might have emulated its Hellenistic predecessors in producing a new Homeric text – and in the process consolidated the Homeric textual tradition around an Antiochene, not an Alexandrian, edition of Homer.[37] If Finkelberg is correct, then we need to consider the Homeric text as we know it as the product of another 'Age of Homer' – a Byzantine recension of the existing Hellenistic recensions, drawing principally perhaps on a text from Antioch, but certainly incorporating alternative perspectives in the scholia.

Conclusion: Reading Homer and the *Shi Jing* as Imperial Texts

Granted that Homeric epic and the *Shi Jing* come down to us as products of empire, shaped in important ways by imperial objectives, how might this change the way we read these texts? It would be impossible, in the space of a short chapter, to offer a comprehensive answer, given especially the vast volume of commentary within which each corpus was enveloped. In part, of course, that observation offers an answer of its own: to read these texts as imperial products means to take seriously (again) their commentarial frames. On a more specific level, I will offer quick glimpses at fairly arbitrary selections from each tradition, to offer at least a suggestion of how we might go about reading the larger works. In so doing, we should, I suggest, bear in mind two things. The first is that these corpuses were viewed as having considerable pedagogical and ethical significance within their respective cultures. The second is that that pedagogical or ethical value could be found just as easily in the room for debate these texts created as in the certainties they offered. Thinking and arguing about ancient poetry, in other words, offered ancient imperial elites a potential space for relatively free discussion of issues which might be difficult to discuss otherwise.

In the case of Homeric epic, I will focus on a very short passage in book three of the *Iliad*. Paris has just fought in single combat against Menelaus, the man whose wife Helen he had abducted, and, when Paris' defeat seemed certain, he was rescued by his protectress Aphrodite, who whisked him back to his bedchamber to reunite him with Helen. Helen herself was not in their bedroom at the time, however, but rather on the battlements of the

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[37] Finkelberg 2010: 243–8.

city, observing her two husbands fight over her, and advising Priam about the identities of the Greek heroes. Aphrodite appears to her in the guise of an elderly maid, urging her to return to her chamber, but Helen is reluctant to do so, even though she senses that the old woman may be a goddess in disguise. Helen believes Paris to have been defeated in battle, and she fears her old maid may be a trick allowing some new prince to seduce her, or if not, that having sex with Paris at this particular moment would do her reputation in Troy no good. Eventually, the disguised Aphrodite is able to persuade her to return to her bedroom, where she indeed has sex with Paris. But before they do so we hear an unexpected small detail:

> But when they arrived at the all-beautiful home of Alexander [Paris],
> The maids then quickly turned back to their work,
> **But Helen went into the high-roofed bedchamber, a goddess among women.**
> **Aphrodite, delighting in laughter, brought out a seat for her,**
> **And the goddess brought it to set down opposite Alexander.**
> **In it sat Helen, daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus**
> Bending her gaze away, she spoke these words to her husband (*Iliad* 3.421–7)

The A scholia tell us that Zenodotus 'athetized' lines 423–6 (that is, marked them with a skewer-like line in his text), on the grounds that it was unseemly (*aprepês*) for a goddess to lift a chair. According to the scholia, Zenodotus proposed, in place of those four lines (bolded in the translation above), the single line 'and she [Helen] sat down opposite lord Alexander'. Our scholiast, in reporting Zenodotus, expresses his dissent, noting that the editor 'has forgotten that Aphrodite is in the guise of an old woman, and that in that form the task is suitable for her'. Another scholia (in the so-called bT scholia) observes that 'if she [does it] as an old woman, it is not strange; if as Aphrodite, Athena also shone a lamp for Odysseus (at *Odyssey* 19.33–34). And it would not be astonishing if Aphrodite performed a service for her sister – which is why she's called "daughter of Zeus" (at 3.426 above)'.

On the surface, it may seem as though Zenodotus is excising lines from the *Iliad* for fairly superficial reasons – removing four entire lines of text because of an imagined lack of propriety, one which the scholia seem to rebut effectively. But the matter is more complicated than that. Zenodotus' *athetesis* marks the lines as suspect in some way, which is not the same thing as removing them from the text. Moreover, while the scholion cites the version of the text which Zenodotus offers instead of the passage in question, it does not present in Zenodotus' own words his reasons for preferring one version of the passage to another, which may, for example, have had to do with the manuscripts available to him. Even if we assume, however, that

his questions about these lines pertain to the appropriateness of a goddess fetching a chair, the fact remains that Zenodotus is presenting us with an alternative, not suppressing the version we know altogether. We should, perhaps, then see this moment as not an assertion that Aphrodite's activity here is inappropriate, but rather a query or debate as to whether it is appropriate or not. Such a query would certainly seem more plausible in the context of a ritual-laden court life in Ptolemaic Alexandria than it would have, perhaps, in Periclean Athens.

To trace a similar narrative in the history of interpretation of the *Shi Jing*, I turn to the second poem in the anthology, *Ge Tan*, or *Kudzu*:[38]

> The kudzu is extensive, spreading through the valley,
> Lush are its leaves; the orioles take flight.
> Coming to rest on a bush, their chirpings are heard afar.
>
> The kudzu is extensive, spreading through the valley,
> Dense are its leaves; I cull and boil them.
> I make fine linen, I make coarse hemp. I clean them without hating the task.
>
> I have spoken to my governess; I have spoken and said I'm getting married.
> I clean my everyday clothes;[39] I wash my court robes.
> Which need cleaning, which don't? I'm returning to my parents.

The casual reader will, I think, feel that this poem indeed requires some explanation if it is to make much sense. Many of the poems in the *Shi Jing* involve gathering and using plants, and invite some kind of folkloric explanation as work songs, but the *dénouement* of this song seems ill-suited to such a purpose. The poem seems to move through a series of topics, from the presence of the kudzu in the valley to its gathering and preparation, to its weaving into cloth. This leads to a discussion of the washing of clothes, and a hint of a woman returning home to her parents, possibly from her husband's home. The earliest interpretation we find for this poem is in an archaeologically recovered text mentioned earlier, the *Kongzi Shilun*, dating to before 300 BCE:

Master Kong said: Through *Ge tan* I understand the odes, which honor the beginnings. The nature of the people is unquestionably like this: when they see the beauty of something, they want to go back to its origin. So, that grass-cloth vine is sung about is because of [the fine and coarse linen, which is made from it].[40]

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[38]   This translation deliberately follows the readings of the Mao tradition; other translations are possible and indeed in places more likely.

[39]   The Mao preface here suggests 'underclothes', but Zheng Xuan glosses this phrase as above.

[40]   Translation from Staack 2010: 896.

This interpretation emphasizes, obviously, the content of the poem, suggesting that the song praises the fabrics made from the kudzu, and, consequently, begins with the kudzu itself. While this explanation is far from comprehensive, it has the merits of remaining close to the text of the poem itself. The Mao preface for this poem takes it in a very different direction:

Kudzu is the root nature of the Queen (i.e. Taisi, the wife of King Wen, the founder of the Zhou dynasty). The queen is in her parents' house, her efforts focused on women's work. Thrifty and economical, wearing carefully-washed clothes, respectfully following the governess who had taught her – being like this, she was able to return to visit her parents in peace, and to transform all under heaven in the wifely Way (*dao*).

This Mao preface is exemplary of its type: explaining the full content of the poem, but doing so by grounding it firmly within a very specific historico-political context. Since the poem appears in the second position out of the three hundred in the *Shi Jing*, it must (by the logic of the Mao tradition) be in praise of the early Western Zhou court, and given that it must describe a woman, it is made to describe Taisi. Although some of the detail borders on the absurd (surely there is nothing remarkable about a queen wearing clean underwear?), the commentary provides a stable frame of reference for the poem, and converts it into a description not only of wifely virtue, but of the queen as a source of wifely virtue that can serve an instructive purpose for the kingdom at large (a purpose often unrealized, given the ruthless ambition and behind-the-scenes politicking of many queens of the Han and of later dynasties).

In this case, as frequently, the later layers of commentary reinforce, with subtle changes, the Mao preface. Zheng Xuan's notes expand the brief reading offered by the Mao preface, arguing that the opening stanzas use the trope of *xing*, or 'affective image', to evoke Taisi at her parents' home before marriage. I offer a paraphrase of Zheng Xuan's line-by-line reading, omitting some details, especially those pertaining to matters of pronunciation and vocabulary:[41]

The kudzu is a matter for brides.[42] The kudzu spreading in the valley represents the woman in her parents' home, as her appearance daily gradually becomes more adult. The lushness of its leaves represents her appearance becoming more beautiful.

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[41] While it contains some fascinating elaborations, Kong Yingda's commentary adds comparatively little to the discussion and space prevents my discussion of his 5000-character discussion of the poem here.

[42] Probably because it is involved in a wedding ritual where mothers prepare kudzu sandals for their daughters before marriage.

The orioles flying and roosting on the bush represents the bride about to head to the gentleman's house in marriage. Their chirping being heard far represents the fame of the bride's talents and beauty having spread far. [When she is preparing the fabrics in the second stanza] represents when the bride is at her parents' home, and still does not know if she will find her match, so she busies herself with humble tasks such as preparing linen and hempen cloth, and cleaning them without detesting the task because of her pure nature. 'I have spoken with my governess, I'm getting married', means that she has received the training in wifely ways from her governess, and is ready to be married.

The portion of Zheng Xuan's commentary that is presented does not explain the final line of the poem, but Kong Yingda's more expansive commentary makes clear that the gist is that once all of the clothes are clean (i.e. so long as her wifely responsibilities are in order), Taisi will be free to make a visit to her parents. Kong's discussion of this issue is extensive, offering many citations from other classical texts in support of and opposed to this custom of a queenly visit home to her parents. Although there is no concrete reason to believe that the poem is about a queen at all, let alone about Taisi, this question of ritual propriety (like the question about Aphrodite lifting a chair in the *Iliad*) seems to strike a chord with its imperial audience, and to form a lively subject of debate.

These increasingly elaborate layers of commentary leave no stone unturned within the original poem, finding a use and a meaning for each character of the poem within the overarching political interpretation originally offered by the Mao preface. And yet that interpretation is forced in the extreme, imposing an elaborate allegorical scheme on a poem which offers few clues to invite such a reading. This interpretation requires some judicious misreading of characters as well: the word *gui* 歸, which I have translated above as 'getting married', literally merely means 'to go home', although the reference to father and mother in the poem may suggest a speaker who is no longer living at home. The recent discovery of the *Kongzi Shilun* ('Confucius' discussion of the *Songs*), and its much simpler interpretation, is both refreshing and telling. The *Kongzi Shilun* interpretation has nothing to do with the imperial family at all, and does not even touch on the theme of marriage, focusing instead on the materiality of the cloth derived from the kudzu, and making that plant therefore a literal, rather than an allegorical, component of the poem.

The fact that we can now recover a reading such as this, older than any reading in the transmitted tradition, is salutary, and certainly begins to open up the possibility of a fresh interpretation of the poem. Yuang-Cheh Hsueh has been inspired by the *Kongzi Shilun*, for example, to offer an

entirely new reading of the poem, where it describes farmers working the fields in the summer, and returning home for the winter months – in many ways a simpler and more satisfying reading of the poem as a whole.[43] It is not my intention here to enter into a discussion of what the 'correct' reading of the poem might be, a question probably long since moot in any case. But I would argue that there is another gain to the discovery of the older, simpler interpretation of this poem: we can now see more clearly the Mao school reading for what it is – a reading produced in the context of empire. We may not be able to determine an 'original' meaning for the poem, but what we can do, to a very considerable extent, is to understand the interpretive practices with which the poem was surrounded, and to think about when and how – and why that was.

The discussions above of Aphrodite's chair-lifting in the *Iliad* and of *Kudzu* and the appropriateness of a queen visiting her parents at their home is necessary cursory, and I have suppressed for reasons of brevity and fluidity a more detailed discussion of the original text in each case. These discussions, in other words, are not meant to be definitive. Rather, they point to the kind of work which becomes possible once we think of texts such as Homeric epic and the *Shi Jing* not just as the textual traces of an original and authoritative oral tradition, but also as textual artefacts in their own right, locked within frames of interpretation which are proper to their own place and time. Understanding those interpretative mechanisms, and their motivations, is not only inherently interesting, but also important in clarifying our own understandings of these texts. Again, we may never be able to recover some sort of primary 'original' meaning for these texts, stripped free of later interpretations (though archaeological finds in China do tempt us to hope we will). What we can do, at least, is to learn more about how meaning was attached to these texts, and how our own understandings of them are built upon these imperial readings, whether through defiant opposition, tacit acceptance, or both.

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8 | The Serpent from Persia: Manichaeism in Rome and China

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Introduction[*]

It is rare to find Rome and China, the two great powers on the Eurasian stage, mentioned in the same ancient or medieval document. One well known exception, of course, is the Chinese part of the bilingual Chinese and Syriac Nestorian Xi'an Monument erected in Chang'an in 781 CE which not only emblazons the Middle Kingdom 中國 (*Zhongguo*), i.e. China, in its title, but also Rome in the archaic and Utopian name of Daqin 大秦 as the land of origin of the true teaching (i.e. that of the Messiah).[1] Even Persia (*Bosi* 波斯), the third of the great Eurasian powers, got a brief mention on the Monument as the homeland of the Magi who paid their respect to the newborn Messiah.[2] On the other hand, there was no mention on the Monument of the fact that Nestorian Christianity, more correctly known now as the Church of the East, came to China from the recently fallen Sasanian Empire and not directly from the Roman East.[3] It is more surprising, therefore, to find in a Coptic text recording the teaching of the self-styled prophet Mani, composed originally in a form of Aramaic akin to Syriac before the end of the third century CE, that the known world according to Mani was divided into four kingdoms: a fourfold division of the known-world into the empires of Persia, Rome, the Axumites (i.e. Ethiopia) and Silis (or *Sinis* i.e. the Chinese – *l/r and n were often interchangeable in Central Asian pronunciation of Chinese words*).[4] To some extent, this is a reflection of the position of the Persian Empire as

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[*] Full references for the abbreviations in the footnotes of this chapter are provided just above the bibliography.

[1] *Da Qin Jingjiao liuxing Zhongguo bei* 大秦景教流行中國碑 (i.e. the Nestorian Monument) ll. 1–2; edited in Saeki 1951, Chinese Text section 1.

[2] Ibid. ll. 6–7, ed. cit. 1: 室女誕聖。於大秦宿告祥。
波斯睹耀以來貢。圓二十四聖 | 有說之舊法。 'Heaven rejoiced, and a virgin gave birth to a sage in Da Qin (i.e. the Roman Empire). In Bosi (i.e. Persia) they saw the brilliant light and brought offering, thus fulfilling the old law as told by the 24 sages.' English translation by Dr. Lance Eccles (unpublished).

[3] On this see Lieu 2009: 227–46, esp. 235–9.

[4] Keph. LXXVII, 188. 31–189, 11. Cf. Altheim 1968: 115–19. On the interchange of the letters 'r' and 'n' in Central Asian personal and place-names see the fundamental study of Hamilton 1995: 25–33, esp. 27. For another rare listing of the empires and peoples of Eurasia which

the middle kingdom between the 'European' powers of Greece and Rome and the 'Asiatic' empires of India and China. The Sasanian Persians had long regarded themselves as rulers of 'Iran and non-Iran' and the latter was interpreted freely to suit their political designs. The *Farsnameh* says that in the throne room of Chosroes Anūshīrvān were three vacant seats kept for the kings of Rome, China and the Khazars (i.e. the Turks) should they wish to come to pay homage to the Shahanshah.[5]

Mani (216–276 CE), the visionary founder of the religion which bears his name, was reported by his disciples to have foreseen the future missionary success of his church and this success would be a definitive proof of the veracity of his doctrines. Whereas those who founded their religions in the West did not go to the East nor vice versa, he had made certain that his religion or church would

go to the west and also for it to go to the east; and in every language they hear the voice of its proclamation, and it is proclaimed in all cities. In this first matter my church surpasses the first churches: Because the first churches were chosen according to place, according to city. My church, mine: It is provided for it to go out from all cities, and its good news attains every country.[6]

Manichaean Mission in the Roman Empire

The earliest Manichaean missionaries who followed the vision of their founder were mainly Syriac-speakers and they could venture with ease into the Roman Empire as Syriac or related forms of Aramaic would have been spoken on both sides of the Romano–Persian frontier. Such was their success that one of the earliest mention of the sect in a Roman source takes the form of the famous rescript of Diocletian and Galerius of 302 which condemned the Elect of the sect to the flames along with their books, and the followers (i.e. Hearers) to hard labour in mines and quarries. The Persian element featured prominently in the rescript as it was the land of origin of Mani although he was not an Iranian but a speaker of a dialect of Aramaic:

As regards the Manichaeans, concerning whom your carefulness has reported to our serenity, we have heard that they have but recently advanced or sprung forth,

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  included the Romans (*purum*) and the Chinese (*tabγač*) see the (Old Turkic) Inscription of Kül Tigin (闕特勒 Que Teqin), East Side, l. 4, edited and translated by Tekin 1968: 232.

[5] Cited in Christensen 1936: 406–7.

[6] *Keph*. CLIV, 370.30–371.19, edited by Funk; translated by Gardner in MTRE 265–6. For the Middle Persian version of this missionary statement see Lieu 2006: 524–7.

like strange and monstrous portents, from their native homes among the Persians –
a nation hostile to us – and have settled in this part of the world, where they are
perpetrating many evil deeds, disturbing the tranquility of the peoples and causing
the gravest injuries to the civic communities; and there is danger that, in process of
time, they will endeavour, as is their usual practice, to infect the innocent, orderly
and tranquil Roman people, as well as the whole of our empire, with the damnable
customs and perverse laws of the Persians as with their malevolent venom.[7]

However, the gradual and inexorable conversion of the Roman Empire
to Christianity under Constantine and his successors, with the exception
of the brief reign of Julian, put a temporary end to the persecution of a
sect which claimed that their founder was an 'Apostle of Jesus Christ'. The
young Augustine was converted to Manichaeism while he was a univer-
sity student at Carthage, as the new faith appealed to him a superior form
of Christianity. He spent nine years (*c.* 374–83) as a Manichaean Hearer
while he was being trained as a rhetor in Carthage without fear of perse-
cution or molestation. After he had moved to Rome, he came to know of
the attempt by a rich Manichaean by the name of Constantius to set up
publicly some form of monastery for the vagrant *Electi* at Rome under
Theodosius (c. 384–88) (Aug., *De mor. Manich.* XX (74), pp. 154–56 and
idem, *c. Faust.* V.5, pp. 277.21–278.8). One may infer from this that some of
the Roman rich were not afraid of acting as patrons for the Manichaeans.
Later, when Faustus, Augustine's Manichaean patron, was sentenced *c.* 386
by Messianus, the Proconsul Africae, along with others to exile for being a
Manichaean (Aug., *c. litt. Petil.* III. 25.30, p. 185.14–28), Augustine would
see it as a sign of the gentleness of the Christian times that Faustus was
given such a lenient sentence (Aug., *c. Faust.* V.8, p. 280.19–22). Under
Theodosius, the standard punishment for being a Manichaean was the loss
of rights as a Roman citizen, especially in not being allowed to make an
effective will (*CT* XVI.5.7).[8] They were also debarred from the civil ser-
vice in a severely worded edict of 527 (*CJ* I.5.12). Augustine and his fellow

[7] *Collatio Mosaicarum* XV.3.4 (edited by Baviera): De quibus sollertia tua serenitati nostrae retulit
   Manichaei<s> audiuimus eos nuperrime ueluti noua *et* inopinata prodigia in hunc mundum de
   Persica aduersaria nobis gente progressa uel orta esse et multa facinora ibi committere, populos
   namque quietos perturbare nec non et ciuitatibus maxima detrimenta inserere: et uerendum
   est, ne forte, ut fieri adsolet, accedenti tempore conentur *per* execrandas consuetudines et
   scaeuas leges Persarum innocentioris naturae homines, Romanam gentem modestam atque
   tranquillam et uniuersum orbem nostrum ueluti uenenis de suis maliuolis inficere. English
   translation in Lieu et al. 2011: 41.
[8] On Late Roman and Early Byzantine laws against the Manichaeans see the fundamental study
   of Kaden 1953: 55–68. On the early legislations against the sect see now Minale 2013. See also
   Lieu 2015: 124–5.

bishops played an active and effective role in bringing the sect into the open by challenging its leaders to public debates.[9] After the conquest of North Africa by the Vandals in 430, some Manichaeans fled to Rome but they were unfortunate to find a fearsome inquisitor in the person of Pope Leo. Not surprisingly, little more is heard of the sect in the Roman West from the end of the fifth century onwards.[10] In the Eastern Empire, although the leaders of the sect had been threatened by capital punishment by the Emperor Anastasius as early as 510 (*CJ* I.5.11), it was not until Justinian that systematic persecution was instigated against the sect from which it did not appear to recover.[11]

The Eastward Expansion of Manichaeism

Besides sending his disciples to the Roman Empire in the footsteps of the triumphant Sasanian forces, Mani also built on the success of the Sasanians in expanding eastwards into Central Asia to firmly establish his religion in the 'Upper Countries' during his lifetime. Soon a string of Manichaean cells was established in the heartland of Parthia and thence the religion ventured into the lands up to the Oxus. In later periods, the Manichaeans in East Turkestan kept alive the legend that it was Mar Ammō, one of Mani's closest disciples, who missionized the 'Upper Country'.[12] The translation from Syriac of Manichaean texts which were strongly based on the language of Christian texts of the third century, including the *Diatessarōn* of Tatian, resulted in a significant number of Greek loanwords in Syriac being phonetically transcribed from their 'borrowed' forms into the three main Middle Iranian dialects in which Manichaean texts have survived: viz. Parthian (Pa.) Middle Persian (MP)[13] and Sogdian (Sogd.):

'qdn'y MP (<Gr. ἔχιδνα) 'viper'
'sym MP (<Gr. ἄσημος or ἀσήμων) 'silver'
'wnglywn Pa/MP/Sogd. (<Gr. εὐαγγέλιον) 'Evangel, Gospel'
'skym Pa. (<Gr. σχῆμα) 'form, shape, outward show'
'spyr Pa./MP (<Gr. σφαῖρα) 'globe, sphere'.

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[9] On the context and effectiveness of public debates involving Manichaeans see Decret 1970: 39–50, 71–89. See also Lim 1995: 70–108.

[10] On Pope Leo the Great and the action he took against the Manichaeans in Rome see specially Schipper and Van Oort 2000.

[11] For the legal position of the Manichaeans in the Roman East, see Minale 2011: 351–78.

[12] M2 R I 34–II 16, *SPAW*, edited and translated by Andreas and Henning 1933: 302–3.

[13] Cf. Durkin-Meisterernst 2004: 36, 56, 69, 86, 87, 91, 108, 196, 203, 206, 222, 325, 385 and Sims-Williams and Durkin-Meisterernst 2012: 73, 98, 114, 127, 179.

ʿstrtywtʾ:n Pa. (<Syr. *ʾsṭrṭywṭʾ* <Gr. στρατιώτης) 'soldier(s), soldiery'

blys Pa. (<Gr. βῶλος) '*bolos* – mass (*massa perditionis*), clod'

δmpδ Sogd. (<Gr. λαπάδες) 'flash, spark'

δmptyr Sogd. (<Gr. λαμπτήρ) 'lamp'

drhm MP (<Gr. δραχμή) 'drachma, silver coin'

δγδym Sogd. (<Gr. διάδημα) 'diadem'

dynʾr Pa./MP (<Gr. δηνάριον) '(gold) dinar'

hygmwn Pa. (<Syr. *hgmwnʾ* <Gr. ἡγεμών) 'ruler, governor'

qʾrwc, qʾrwz Pa. (<Gr. κῆρυξ) n. 'herald'

kbwd Pa. (<Syr. *qbwtʾ* <Gr. κιβωτός or κιβώτιον) 'box – used of the Ark of the Covenant'

qpyδ, kpyδ Sogd. (<Gr. καπηλεῖον) 'shop, stall'; in astronomy 'period of twenty seconds'

krʾysyʾkh Sogd. (<Gr. ἐκκλησία) '(Christian) church'

krkδn Sogd. (<Gr. χαλκηδών) 'chalcedony'

qmr MP (<Gr. καμάρα) 'vault'

qtrywn Pa. (<Syr. *qnṭrwnʾ* <Gr. κεντύριων <Lat. *centurio*) 'centurion'

lmtyr Pa./MP (<Gr. λαμπτήρ) 'lamp'

mrγʾrt Sogd. (<Gr. μαργαρίτης) 'pearl'

mrγt Sogd. (<Gr. μάραγδος) 'emerald'

nwm Sogd. (<Syr. *nmws* and Aram. *nms* <Gr. νομός) 'law'

styr Sogd. (<Gr. στατήρ) '*stater* (a gold coin)'

trnys, t̲rnys Pa. (<Gr. θρόνος) 'throne'

zwnws Pa. (<Gr. ζώνη, gen. ζώνης) originally 'belt' but used to mean 'district, zone' and later as an astronomical term to designate the 'Milky Way' or 'ecliptic'

The use of the Greek word νομός by the Manichaeans of Central Asia is of particular interest to scholars of the history of East–West contact. Already a loan word into Aramaic and Syriac, νομός would later be used by Turkish-speaking Manichaeans as a technical term with a rather wider meaning of 'law, doctrine etc.' as in the terms *nom törü* 'doctrine and rule' (i.e. *the* doctrine), *ariγ nom* 'the pure law' and *nom qutï* 'the Majesty of the Law' (i.e. the Manichaean deity Vahman). These are very important epithets for the Manichaean religion and for the self-identity of the sect. The Old Turkish *nwm* when passed to Sogdian was also used to translate the important Sanskrit Buddhist term *dharma*.[14] It is a true testament to the cultural contact through religions that such a well-known Greek term should come to be used by both Buddhists and Manichaeans as a key concept in Central

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[14] On *nwm* in Old Turkish see Clauson 1972: 777. For the terms *nom törü* and *ariγ nom*, see *Xᵘāstvānīft* (British Library Ms. Or. 8212: 178) ll. 74 and 132. Cf. Clark 2013: 84 (text), 90 (translation). For *nom qutï*, see U85 (D 260,26) V 1 (= l. 351 of the entire work). Cf. Clark 1982: 177 (text), 189 (translation). See also Klimkeit 1979: 252–60.

Asia. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that two of the very few read-ily recognizable words of Greek origin found in Chinese texts of the Tang period are both titles of Manichaean scriptures:[15]

應輪 **Yinglun** (<Pa./MP/Sogd. *ʾwnglywn* <Gr. εὐαγγέλιον) 'Evangel, Gospel'
鉢迦摩帝夜 **Bojiamodiye** (<Pa.* <Syr. *prgmtyʾ* <Gr. πραγματεία) 'treatise, the *Pragmateia*'

Mar Ammō is also said to have taken the religion across the Oxus River into Kushan, now part of Afghanistan.[16] However, there is little evidence that Manichaeism was successfully propagated in East Turkestan before the sixth century CE. The Pamir Mountains appears to have constituted a formidable barrier to Manichaean mission. The religion had by now attracted followers among Sogdian merchants and Manichaean texts would have certainly been translated into the Sogdian language from Middle Persian and Parthian with the result that the texts came to be read only in Sogdian. In the course of the sixth century, however, the eastward dif-fusion of the religion was given a huge boost by a schism within the sect that led to the formation of the so-called Eastern Diocese under Mãr Shãd Ohrmezd. The religion was revitalized and there was a reversion to the reading of Manichaean scriptures in Middle Persian and Parthian. In short Mãr Shãd Ohrmezd achieved nothing less than an 'up-grading' of the reli-gion in the face of the growing power and influence of Islam in Central Asia. His followers styled themselves the *Dīnāwarīya* (MP *dēnawar* and Pa. *dēnāβar*) – a term which means 'having or possessing a religion'.[17] This is the name for the Manichaean religion mentioned by the famous Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang 玄奘 who encountered adherents of the members of the *tinaba* 提那跋 sect, that is to say, of the *Dīnāwarīya*,[18] in 'Persia' – (*bolasi* 波剌斯),[19] more precisely in Bactria and Sogdiana – some time between 630 and 640 CE. Xuanzang did not travel further west; so we have no idea whether he would have encountered other Manichaean congregations who were not *Dīnāwarīya*. According to the *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統記, a late but trustworthy Buddhist source from *c.* 1265, in 694 CE a *fuduodan* 拂多誕 came to the Chinese court from Persia (*bosi* 波斯) where he preached

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[15] Mikkelsen 2006: 102, 109.

[16] M2 R II 16 – V I 30 in Andreas and Henning 1933: 303–5.

[17] On the date and reasons for the expansion of the sect beyond the Oxus see Colditz 1992: 324–7 and Colditz 1994: 229–34.

[18] Cf. Sundermann 1995: 418–19.

[19] Dà Tang Xiyuji 大唐西域記 XI (by Xuanzang 玄奘, ed.) 37 = T 2053.938a: 天祠甚多。 提那跋外道之徒為所宗. Cf. Chavannes and Pelliot 1913: 150, Texte I.

the erroneous religion of the 'Book of the Two Principles'.[20] The work is very likely to be the *Šābuhragān* – a summary of the teachings of Mani written in Middle Persian specially for Mani's royal patron Shapur I and therefore a suitable work to present to the Chinese court. *Fuduodan* is not a personal name but the title for a Manichaean bishop in Sogdian form *('βt'δ'n)*, literally 'seventieth', namely 'is one of seventy-two bishops', which was supposed to have been created by Mani to give the impression of apostolic succession.[21] A *mushe* 慕闍, that is (Sogd.) *mōžak* 'teacher', who arrived at court in 719 appeared to have made a strong impression. He had been sent by the ruler of Čaγāniyān in order to impress the emperor with his astronomical expertise.[22] We have here an example of a continuous trend of Manichaeans seeking royal patronage through their skills as physicians and astrologists. In 731, a Manichaean priest was invited by the royal court to compile a summary of the religion – a text which has survived with the title of *Compendium of the Doctrine of Mani* (摩尼光佛教法略儀 *Moni quangfo jiaofa yi lüe)* in order to give the court the basic tenets of the religion.[23] A later but highly reliable source, the *Minshu* 閩書, gives the name of this teacher as 蜜烏沒斯 *Mi Wumosi* which can be reconstructed as Mihr-Ohrmezd in Parthian.[24]

Not long after the fall of the Hephthalites (*c.* 560 CE), the major power blocking the main overland routes between China and Iran, the fabled Silk Road began to open for long distance trade on a much large scale than before and the religion of Mani which had already been adopted by Sogdian merchants began to be propagated in Tang China, especially among the mercantile colonies. The Tang government was not too concerned about it being a religion of foreigners but was much more worried about it taking root as a foreign religion in China. In 731, a tersely worded edict was issued by the Tang government intended not to eradicate the religion totally, but to limit its spread drastically:

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[20] Cf. *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統記LIV, *T* 2039.474c: 武后延載元年。波斯國拂多誕持二宗 經偽教來朝. Cf. Chavannes and Pelliot 1913: 150–1, Texte II.

[21] On the term *'βt'δ'n* see Sundermann 2001: 158. [English translation by Sundermann 2016: 81.]

[22] *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜, ed. 王欽若Wang Qinruo, 971.4b–5a：[開元七年] 六月大食國吐火羅國南天竺國獻使朝貢。其吐火羅國支汗那王帝賒上表獻解天文人大慕闍。其人智慧幽深 。問無不知伏乞天恩喚取慕闍。親問臣等事意及諸教法。知其人有如此之藝能。望請令其供奉並置一法堂。依本教供養。Cf. Chavannes and Pelliot 1913: 151–53, Texte III.

[23] Text in *T* 2141A (LIV 1279c–1281a). Eng. translation (partial): Henning and Haloun 1952: 184–212.

[24] *Minshu* 閩書, 7, ed. He Qiaoyuan 何喬遠, Vol. 1 (Fujian, 1994) 172: 至武則天時。慕闍高弟蜜烏沒斯拂多誕復入見。群僧姤譖。互相擊難。則天悅其說。留使課經. Pelliot 1923: 203–4.

The doctrine of *Mo-mo-ni* [= Mar Mani, i.e. Manichaeism] is basically a perverse belief and fraudulently assumes to be [a school of] Buddhism and will therefore mislead the masses. It deserves to be strictly prohibited. However since it is the indigenous religion of the Western Barbarians and other [foreigners], its followers will not be punished if they practice it among themselves.[25]

Unlike the Roman Empire for which Arsacid Parthia or Sasanian Persia had posed such a military threat to her eastern frontiers, the same Iranian powers, because of their greater distance from China's main western boundary were not her traditional enemies. There was, therefore, no traditional animosity in Tang China towards Iranian merchants who brought the religion of Mani to China, along with Zoroastrianism and Nestorian Christianity (i.e. the Church of the East) to her capital cities. Moreover, with the Crescent looming large on the western horizon, the rulers of Persia and Transoxania turned to China for military assistance to halt the seemingly invincible forces of Islam. According to Chinese sources, the last Sasanian emperor, Yazdgird III (632–51), sent envoys to China requesting direct military intervention to hold back the Arabs but the Tang government felt that the distances involved were too great for intervention to be effective.[26] As the Arabs pushed relentlessly into Central Asia after the collapse of the Sasanian dynasty, the Chinese were forced to take belated action. A Chinese army under the leadership of a Korean general was sent west of the Pāmirs but it was disastrously defeated on the banks of the River Talas in 751.[27] With the demise of the Sasanian dynasty, many Persians fled to East Turkestan and China. Some, like Pērōz, the son of Yazdgird, won fame as mercenaries and *condottieri* in the service of the Tang government. Pērōz was even briefly put in control of a Persian government in exile in Seistan by the Chinese and later died in China.[28] The tombstone of the wife of one such Persian *condottiero* inscribed in both Sasanian Middle Persian and Chinese was discovered at Xi'an 西安 (i.e. Chang'an 長安 in Tang times) in 1955 which shows that he was an officer of an elite corps, the so-called Divine Strategy Army (*shence jen* 神策軍).[29] The Iranian refugees in Tang China filled many of the roles that the 'White' Russians would assume in the

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25 *Tongdian* 通典 40.229c. Cf. Chavannes and Pelliot 1913: 151–3, Texte III: 開元二十年七月敕
「末摩尼法。本是邪見。妄稱佛教。誑惑黎元。宜嚴加禁斷。以其西胡等既是鄉法。
當身自行不須科罪者。」Cf. Chavannes and Pelliot 1913: 178–9, Texte VI.

26 *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 198.5312–13.

27 *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 2218.6251–52.

28 Cf. Schafer 1951: 407–9.

29 Cf. Sundermann and Thilo 1966: 439; Harmatta 1971: 366–7; Humbach and Shìpíng 1988: 74–7.

early eras of the Republic of China after the victory of the Bolshevik armies in Russian Central Asia. The Arab conquest also brought about influxes of Manichaeans into Central Asia from the Land of the Two Rivers.

A high-water mark for the diffusion and propagation of Manichaeism was reached when the Khaghan of the Uighur Turks was converted to the religion *c.* 762/3, three decades after the edict of 731. As Khan Bügü (*r.* 759–799) was one of the principal sources of military support for the ailing Tang government, the religion of his choosing became a *religio licita* anywhere in China for a half century and it was during this period of respite that the religion was able to establish itself in a manner which would enable it to survive into the early modern period despite periodic persecution by Chinese officials.[30]

Central Asia and Egypt – a Century of Discoveries

The persecution of Manichaeans throughout Eurasia by Christian, Islamic and Confucian authorities in the centuries after the death of Mani was so thorough that until the beginning of the last century no genuine writings of Mani existed in any library or manuscript collection in the world, except in the form of quotations used by heresiologists like Augustine to refute the religion.[31] However, a considerable number of Manichaean texts lay hidden waiting to be discovered. As already mentioned, the Manichaeans in China managed to convert the Khan Bügü of the powerful Uighur Turks to their faith.[32] For the next century the religion became the official religion of the Uighurs who were settled by the Chinese around the city of Chotcho (or Qočo) near Turfan in Eastern Turkestan. Here Manichaean scribes were able to copy and translate texts in a variety of Central Asian languages. When the Mongol invaders occupied the region in the thirteenth century there was still a small number of Manichaean monasteries existing in Chotcho, including one with a well-stocked library. Instead of putting the latter to the torch, the invaders, who were mainly Muslim Mongols, simply collapsed the building, thereby preserving its contents until rediscovery by German scholars at the turn of the last century. Between 1902 and 1914 they brought back to Berlin tens of thousands of text- and codex-fragments

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[30] Cf. Clark 2000: 83–123 and Sundermann 2001: 159–60, 81–2 (English translation).

[31] The more important citations from the Greek and Latin Fathers are collected in Lieu et al. 2011: 36–143.

[32] On the role of the Uighurs in the dissemination of Manichaeism in Central Asia see the authoritative assessment by Sundermann 2001: 153–68, esp. 160–5.

on Chinese paper with fine calligraphy and well executed miniatures used as text illustrations. Many of the texts were written in unknown languages but in a script strongly reminiscent of Estrangelo Syriac. It is indeed fortunate that the Professor of Chinese at the Kaiser Wilhelm (now the Humboldt) University of Berlin at the time of the discovery was F.W.K. Müller, then one of the finest linguists in the world. Like all serious German Orientalists of his day, he had gone through the 'Classical' Oriental Studies curriculum which demanded a high degree of proficiency in three oriental languages from completely different linguistic families, *viz*. Arabic, Persian and Turkish. These he mastered before he embarked on the study of more exotic languages like Chinese and Japanese. He would undoubtedly have also picked up Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac and Old Persian along the way besides having had a solid grounding in Greek and Latin through the *Gymnasial* system – a *sine qua non* for school children intending to specialize in the Humanities in Wilhelmine Germany. It only took a few months of concentrated effort by Müller before he was able recognize some of the texts were written in a form of Middle Iranian.[33] Later scholars would identify two dialects closely related in these Middle Iranian texts, viz. Middle Persian, the south-western dialect and the language of the Sasanian court, and Parthian, the north-eastern dialect spoken around the Caspian Sea. These are exactly the same two Middle Iranian dialects used in the famous trilingual inscription (the third language being Greek – the language of the captive Roman soldiers and of the Emperor Valerian) unearthed by American archaeologists between 1936 and 1939 on the Ka'ba-i Zardušt and popularly known by its Latinized title as the *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*.[34]

Once Müller had succeeded to decipher the contents of some of the texts by means of comparative philology – there were no diglots then discovered – he realized that the contents of many of the texts were Manichaean and he published the first major collection of Middle Iranian Manichaean fragmentary texts from Turfan containing *inter alia* fragments from the semi-canonical *Šābuhragān*[35] In fact, among the 5,000 or so fragments of Manichaean texts in Middle Iranian languages brought back to Berlin by German explorers, the vast majority are in Middle Persian and Parthian but some in a dialect of Middle Iranian then almost completely unknown to scholars.[36] Fortunately there were (Nestorian) Christian texts too among the

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[33] Müller 1904a: 348–52.

[34] See now the major edition by Huyse 1999.

[35] Müller 1904b, esp. 11–28 for the fragments from the *Šābuhragān*.

[36] On the Berlin collection of Middle Iranian *Manichaica* see Sundermann 1970: 54–61 and Sundermann 1991: 283–8.

fragments, and some were parts of the New Testament translated into this then unknown dialect. Using the Syriac New Testament as his Rosetta Stone, Müller was able to begin the process of deciphering the texts which turned out to be in Sogdian, the *lingua franca* of the Silk Road in the Tang period.[37] There are also Manichaean texts written in New Persian[38] and one text each in Bactrian[39] and Tocharian[40] in the Berlin collection: thus confirming the links of these regions to Manichaeism as evidenced in the Chinese sources. Almost two thirds of the texts are written in the Manichaean script[41] and even among the 1,000+ fragments written in Sogdian script about half are Manichaean in content.[42]

The ground-breaking decipherment of Middle Iranian by Müller was not his only major linguistic achievement as he devoted a great deal of his time and effort also on texts in Old Turkish (Uygur) brought back from Turfan. Although most of the Old Turkic texts were of Buddhist provenance, some of them (from both Turfan and later Dunhuang) were Manichaean.[43] The official publication of these Manichaean texts in Old Turkish was the work of one of the most flamboyant figures of the German expeditions, Albert von Le Coq,[44] a scholar-adventurer *par excellence*. He is frequently vilified nowadays in China because he removed priceless Buddhist and Manichaean wall-paintings from a number of cave-temples in the Turfan region. Most of these frescoes that survived the ravages of the two World Wars in Berlin are now exhibited in the Museum of Asian Art at Dahlem.

A minor discovery from Central Asia, but one of great importance for East–West contact, is that of Manichaean texts in Chinese from the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang; two of them were brought to Britain by Marc Aurel Stein in 1907 but one remained in China and is now in the National Library of Beijing. The total haul of manuscripts brought back from the Mogao Caves by Stein (most of them are Buddhist in content) was so large that the digitization of those deposited in London, Paris and Beijing under the aegis of the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) is the only way that

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[37] Müller 1912, Nr. 2.

[38] Provasi 2011: 119–77.

[39] M1224, edited and translated in Sims-Williams 2009: 245–68, pls. X–XI.

[40] The sole Manichaean text in Tocharian constitutes the bilingual (Old Turkish and Tocharian) 'Great Hymn to Mani' and found in a Buddhist style *potḥi*-book and not in a codex or a scroll. See Gabain and Winter 1958: 10–15. New edition in Clark 2013: 178–83.

[41] Though dated, Boyce 1960 remains indispensable as a handlist of fragments in Manichaean script in the Berlin collections.

[42] On Manichaean texts in the Sogdian script see esp. Reck 2006.

[43] For a hand-list of Old Turkic Manichaean texts in both Manichaean and Uygur scripts, see Wilkens 2000. Also useful but outdated by the work of Wilkens is Clark 1997: 89–141.

[44] Le Coq 1911: 277–314, Le Coq 1912, Le Coq 1919, and Le Coq 1922.

they can easily be consulted by researchers. The three Manichaean texts in Chinese comprise (1) a long treatise or sermon on the Light-*Nous* – a highly Gnostic concept, (2) a long hymn-scroll, and (3) a compendium or catechism.[45] The *Hymnscroll* and the main part of the *Compendium* are both in the British Library, and a fragment containing the last dozen or so lines of the *Compendium* is in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris as the fragment was accidentally picked up by the great French Sinologist Paul Pelliot who visited the Caves after Stein, and it came to be named after him: *viz*. the 'Fragment Pelliot'.

The survival of Manichaean texts is also a tribute to the sect's ability to conceal their scriptures from the prying eyes of the authorities. This was particularly the case in Roman Egypt where the climate permitted the survival of texts deliberately concealed in Antiquity. A significant hoard of Manichaean texts in Coptic was found *ca*. 1929 by workmen digging for fertilizer in Medinet Madi in Egypt.[46] The find consists of a library of eight codices in Coptic that had once belonged to either a Manichaean Hearer or group of Hearers (as it contains only one canonical work – the Letters of Mani).

The hoard of Coptic codices from Medinet Madi consisted of at least seven works. Four codices found their way to Berlin and three to London (now Dublin). *The Kephalaia of the Teacher* (a small part of this went to Vienna as a result of the dislocations caused by the World War)[47] – a collection of lecture notes by Mani's disciples; *The Epistles* of Mani; *The Synaxeis of the Living Gospel (of Mani)*;[48] and a (Manichaean) church history were among those which went to Berlin.[49] A book of *Psalms*, together with an (original) index; a collection of homilies or devotional sermons;[50] and *The Kephalaia of the Wisdom of my Lord Mani*[51] constituted Chester Beatty's

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[45] All three Chinese Manichaean texts from Dunhuang have been translated into German by Schmidt-Glintzer 1987. On the continuing work on Manichaean texts in Chinese see Mikkelsen 2015: 259–72.

[46] For a full account of the discovery and its significance, see now Robinson 2015. For a briefer account, see Robinson 2000: 19–62.

[47] Polotsky and Böhlig 1940. [The names of Polotsky and Böhlig did not appear on the cover because of the Nuremburg Laws (Polotsky was Jewish), but their roles as editors and translators of *Lieferung* 1–10 are clearly stated in the Introduction (p. iv).], Böhlig 1966; Funk 1999, Funk 2000, and continuing). For English translation of *Lieferung* 1–13, see Gardner 1995.

[48] The exact contents of this codex (i.e whether it also contains other works), and its relationship to *The Living Gospel* itself, remains unclear. Work is currently being conducted on this poorly preserved Coptic codex by Professor W.-P. Funk at Quebec (Canada).

[49] Only a few leaves of this work have survived. Cf. Pedersen 1997: 193–201.

[50] This was to be the first of the Medinet Madi codices to be published: Polotsky 1934. New edition with additional pages by Pedersen 2006.

[51] The relationship between the two *Kephalaia* codices has also been open to debate. However, despite the variation in titles, it was originally thought that the Dublin codex should best be

share of the find.[52] The work of conservation of all the Manichaean codices from Medinet Madi was entrusted initially to Hugo Ibscher, a noted conservator in Germany, and the work was continued by his son Rolf Ibscher. However, the fact that a significant part of the collection was owned by an Irish collector based in Britain – the Chester Beatty Collection was housed in London until after the Second World War – meant that at least one Anglophone scholar had the opportunity to share in the excitement of deciphering this new material. The eminent British Coptic scholar Professor E.W. Crum of Cambridge University entrusted the publication of the 'Second Part' of the *Psalm-Book* to a younger scholar, Charles Allberry, a brilliant classical scholar who had taken up the study of Coptic as a Fellow of Christ's College. Allberry's outstanding translation of these hauntingly beautiful Manichaean psalms appeared shortly before the outbreak of the World War and his work had a major impact not only on Manichaean scholarship but also on religious literature in general with far reaching effects on theosophical and neo-Gnostic writings both in Europe and in North America.[53] Thanks to his excellent knowledge of German, Allberry was one of the linguists employed at Bletchley Park in the early stages of the War to decipher enemy signals but he retrained as a navigator and was killed on active service with the RAF Bomber Command on 3 April 1943. Had he survived, he would have undoubtedly completed the work on the more fragmentary 'First Part' of the *Psalm-Book* with equal brilliance. His legacy has survived in popular fiction as he was almost certainly the model behind Roy Calvert, the eccentric but brilliant Cambridge Manichaean Sogdian (but not Coptic!) scholar who featured in one of C.P. Snow's best-selling novels: *The Light and the Dark*.[54]

In 1970, the learned world was astonished by the announcement by two German scholars, Albert Henrichs and Ludwig Koenen, of the successful decipherment of one of the smallest codices on parchment, found (allegedly) in the Papyrus-Sammlung at the University of Cologne. It contained a semi-autobiographical account of the early life of Mani in Greek, which might have

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regarded as simply a continuation of the Berlin one. However, recent work done on the Dublin *Kephalaia* by Professor Iain Gardner has shown that there are major differences between the two works and the Dublin *Kephalaia* contains a great deal more material on the Iranian elements of the religion. Sadly a definitive edition of either the Dublin *Kephalaia* or the *Psalm-Book* Part I is still some years away. However, important results have already been obtained from the more legible pages. See now especially Gardner et al. 2015.

[52]   A photographic/facsimile edition of all the Coptic Manichaean codices from Medinet Madi in the Chester Beatty Library is available: Giversen 1986–8. There is no facsimile edition of the Coptic Manichaean codices at present housed in the Bode Museum in Berlin.

[53]   Allberry and Ibscher 1938. New editions (*partim*): Wurst 1996 and Richter 1998.

[54]   On this see especially Khambatta 1987: 193–9.

been the Greek version of first part of the Coptic 'Historical Text' from Medinet Madi which had been missing from Berlin since the end of the World War.[55] Measuring only 38 × 45 mm, with a single column of an average of twenty-three lines per page, in size the *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis* (*CMC*) as the document is known to scholars, approximates to Christian amulets like *P. Ant*. II 54 (26 × 40 mm, *Pater Noster*) or *P. Oxy.* XVII 2065 (Ps. 90). However, with nearly 200 pages, the *CMC* has by far the largest number of quires (eight as against one). The wearing of miniature codices as amulets or prophylactus in Late Antiquity is well attested but the *CMC* was produced for it to be read by the followers of the religion. The tiny pages were ruled both for the lines and for the margins, and the ruling is still visible in places. The height of the individual letters never exceeded 1 mm. The text, as it is now exhibited in the Papyrussammlung of the University of Cologne, is hardly readable with the naked eye. A glass bottle filled with water was the most likely enlargement tool used by the ancient scribes to execute such miniature calligraphy. When enlarged by modern methods, the writing is very clear and possesses distinctive proportional spacing and wide and thick strokes. A fourth century date was originally given to the text as the Greek shows a number of clear Semitic borrowings which otherwise might have been 'refined' by later copyists or editors. However, two Russian scholars have tried to date the *CMC* on palaeographical grounds to the seventh/eighth century. The distinctive style of the writing, termed 'die rechtsgeneigte Spitzbogenmajuskel *palästinischen* Duktus', is typical of texts produced in the early Islamic period and, in particular, of bilingual liturgical texts with Greek alongside Syriac.[56] Unfortunately the main editors of the text have moved on to other areas of research and to my knowledge there has been no official reply to or rebuttal of this attempt at re-dating by the two Russian scholars.

The century of discoveries of Manichaean texts continued right to the end. An extraordinary find was made at a site that hardly features in our knowledge of Roman or Early Christian Egypt. The Oasis of Dakleh is situated south-south-west of Cairo and 280 km due south-west of Asyut along the desert road. The extent and nature of the surface remains at the site had impressed the occasional learned visitor since the turn of the last century and its name in Arabic, Ismant al-Kharab, means, appropriately, 'Ismant the Ruined'. Initial excavation by the Dakhleh Oasis Project (DOP) revealed that the site was a Roman period village named Kellis, abandoned *c.* 400 CE. The remoteness of this oasis settlement was the ideal home for a Manichaean community of

[55]   Henrichs and Koenen 1970: 97–216.
[56]   Cf. Fonkič and Poljakov 1990: 22–30.

unknown size. From the 1980s onwards a large amount of written material on papyri and on wooden boards had been recovered and by the early 1990s a number of Manichaean texts had been identified. The first of these texts to make an impact on Manichaean scholarship is a well-preserved 'Hymn to the Emanations' in Greek (Εὐχὴ τῶν προβολῶν).[57] Beautifully inscribed on two wooden boards, the hymn has excited a great deal of interest among Manichaean scholars as it was composed in relatively good Greek and surprisingly no homage was paid in the hymn to Mani himself, but only to the deities of the Second Emanation. Professor Gardner, one of the leading scholars working on the new find was alerted by François De Blois to a strong parallel to the hymn given in the form of a prayer as preserved in Arabic by Ibn an-Nadim in his catalogue of Manichaean writings.[58] A fuller version of the hymn has now been found in a number of Parthian fragments from Turfan and which the editors believe to have once been part of a canonical work of Mani, viz. *Hymns and Psalms*.[59] A comparison of parts of the Greek and the Parthian versions will show how close the two are in content even though we no longer possess the Syriac original to both versions:[60]

Greek:

(ll. 78–84): Προσ(κυνῶ καὶ δοξάζω) | πάντας θεούς, πάντας ἀγγέλους, |τοὺς ζῶντας καὶ καθερούς, |80 τοὺς ὅλον τοῦτο τὸ δημι|ούργημα βαστάζοντα<ς> βου|λήσει τοῦ μεγίστου καὶ ἐναρέ|του φωτός, τοῦ πάντων τῶν | ὑμνουμένων δεσπόζοντος.

Parthian:

§365b: [nmꞌc brꞌm] ꞌwd ꞌfryn ꞌm ° ꞌ(w)[hrywn yzdꞌn hrwyn] fryštgꞌn ° jywndg(ꞌ)[n ꞌwd pwꞌgꞌn] [••• ••• ••• ••• ••• ••](ẖ) ꞌwd ꞌndr °° pd qꞌm [••• •••]hw °° rwšn wzrg °° ẅ hynzꞌwrystwm °° h(r)wyn šhrꞌn xwdꞌy °° °°

I wor(ship and glorify) all Gods, all Angels, the living and pure, |80 who support this whole creation with the permission of the great and virtuous light, who rules over all those (now) who are praised in hymns.

I worship and bless all the gods, all the angels living and pure (who uphold this) outside(?) and in(side) at the wish of … him, the great and the most powerful light, the lord of all the lands.

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[57] The initial publication was that of an Australian scholar: Jenkins 1995: 243–63. See also KLT ii, 111–28, Gardner 2011: 245–62 and Rubio 2009: 221–38.

[58] Ibn Al-Nadim, *Kitab al-Fihrist*, Arabic text in Flügel 1871: 333–4.

[59] The Parthian fragments are edited in Durkin-Meisterernst and Morano 2010: 108–15.

[60] Parthian version (M1941+M1971): Durkin-Meisterernst and Morano 2010: 110–11. Greek version (P.Kell.Gr. 98, former T.Kellis 22): Lieu et al. 2011: 18–19.

(ll. 85–94): Προσ(κυνῶ καὶ δοξάζω) πάντας τοὺς φωτινοὺς | ἀγγέλους, τοὺς σύμπαντας | τοῦ κόσμου δυναστεύοντας, καὶ ὑποτάσσοντας πάντας | δαίμονας καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν κα|κίαν 90 καὶ τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑ|περασπίσοντας καὶ φυλάτ|τοντας αὐτὴν ἀπὸ τῶν πονη|ρῶν δαιμόνων καὶ τὸ ἀγα|θὸν αὔξοντας ἐν αὐτῇ.

§366b: nmʼc brʼm ʼwd ʼfrynʼm ° ʼw hrwyn fryštgʼn [ky ʼbr hm] g šhr pʼdyxšʼ (n) ʼhynd ẅ nrʼ(m) ynd dyw(ʼn) ʼ](wd) h(m)g bzgyft ʼwd ʼ (w) h(mg) ʼrdʼwyft (ʼc m)[•• •••••• ʼpdgy](r)wy(n)d ° [ʼw](d) wxd pʼynd ° c dy(w)[ʼn ʼwd](k)[y] qyrbgyft prw(r)zynd

I wor(ship and glorify) all the enlightening angels who dominate the world and subjugate all demons and all |90 evil, shielding righteousness and guarding it from the wicked demons and increasing the good in it.

I worship and bless all the angels who are ruling/powerful in the whole land/world and (who) restrain the demons and all badness and (who) receive(?) the whole community of the righteous from … and (who) also protect (them) from the demons and who nurture goodness.

The majority of the Manichaean texts from Kellis are in Coptic,[61] undoubtedly the main spoken language of the community, and some in Greek[62] in addition to the 'Hymn of Emanations', but there were also fragments of bilingual Coptic and Syriac word-lists which show that the translation from Syriac into Coptic was being attempted.[63] Among the textual finds are about a dozen of Mani's own canonical epistles[64] and personal letters written by members of the community with fascinating references to the religious practices and beliefs of the sect.[65] There are also two psalms which parallel those found in the *Psalm-Book* from Medinet Madi showing a close link between the two finds.[66] This seems to suggest that the

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[61] T.Kell.Copt.1–7 and P.Kell.Copt. 1–5, edited and translated in *KLT i*, 1–80. See also Coptic material listed in the next four footnotes.

[62] P. Kell. Gr. 91–93 edited and translated in *KLTi* , 94–110.

[63] See esp. T.Kell.Syr./Copt.1 edited and translated in M. Franzmann, *ap*. *CDTK i*, 344–59.

[64] P.Kell.Copt. 53 and 54. Cf. *KLT ii*, 11–93. See also *MTRE* 166–68.

[65] P.Kell.Copt.14–17, 19–22, 24–27, 29–34, 36–37 edited and translated in *CDTK i*, 136–44, 156–81, 182–200, 202–223, 228–235. Some examples are given in translation only by Gardner in *MTRE* 272–81.

[66] T.Kell.Copt.6 (edited and translated in *KLT i,* 43–49) parallels *Psalm-Book* Pt. II, Ps. 261 (edited and translated by Allberry in Allberry and Ibscher 1938, 75.10–76.25) and 126. 222) and P.Kell.Copt.2 (edited and translated in *KLT i,* 63–73) parallels *Psalm-Book*, Pt. I, Ps. 126 (unpublished). Cf. *KLT ii,* 173.

Manichaean community at Kellis had come from the Nile Valley, either escaping from persecution or as a direct plantation by early missionaries, and its members brought with them a number of texts already translated from Syriac into Coptic.

Crossing Boundaries

Manichaeism was a foreign religion in both the Roman and the Chinese Empires because of its indelible Persian roots. How the religion managed to surmount national, cultural and linguistic barriers when it entered both the Roman and the Chinese spheres of influence begs some interesting questions. We have seen already that Diocletian and his colleagues used the Persian origin of the religion as a reason for persecution. However, although Mani grew up and spent much of his life in the heartland of the Sasanian Empire in what is now modern Iraq, he was a speaker of Aramaic and not of Persian. In fact, he had to use an interpreter (MP *trkwm'n*) when he communicated with members of the Sasanian court.[67] The basis of his teaching was purportedly found in a canon of seven works or scriptures that he wrote in Aramaic, but, as we have noted, he produced in Middle Persian a summary of his cosmogonic teaching for Shapur I in Middle Persian, the official dialect the Sasanian court, *viz*. the *Šābuhragān*.[68] In the surviving fragments of this semi-canonical work, almost all the Aramaic deities were given an Iranian guise and this Iranized version of Mani's teaching undoubtedly helped with propagating his religion among Zoroastrians.

The use of Aramaic as the main written language of the sect means that the latter had a ready linguistic bridge for crossing the western frontier since Aramaic, and particularly the version of it known to us today as Syriac, was widely spoken in the eastern parts of the Roman Empire. Moreover, Mani's Christian roots and his claim to be the 'Apostle of Jesus Christ' allowed his new found revelation to be diffused alongside Christianity within the Roman Empire, something that was particularly apposite at the turn of the third century when Christianity was becoming a significant force, socially as well as spiritually, in the Roman East. The Conversion of Constantine enabled the religion to maximize on the period of religious peace which followed and we learn from Ammianus Marcellinus (XV.13.1–2) that Constantine appointed Sebastianus, one of his multi-lingual commanders,

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[67]   M3 R 2, edited and translated in Henning 1942: 949.
[68]   Substantial fragments of this work has survived see especially, Boyce 1975: 60–81; Mackenzie 1979: 500–34; Mackenzie 1980: 288–310; Hutter 1992.

to inquire into Manichaeism. We may infer from this that the Emperor wanted to know how this missionary religion fitted into the new order, especially whether it was a genuine form of Christianity or not. Although the religion secured an early foot-hold in Syria via Palmyra, then a major trading centre, it was in Egypt that we have most evidence of its missionary activities. The discovery of Manichaean texts in Coptic from Medinet Madi and in Greek, Syriac and Coptic from Kellis as mentioned both shows that the Manichaean communities were multilingual. The older hypothesis that the Manichaeans in Roman Egypt would have translated their scriptures first into Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Roman East, and then from Greek into Coptic now needs serious revision. The textual material found at Kellis includes lexical lists in Syriac and Coptic implying that direct translation from the former to the latter was entirely feasible. The Manichaean texts Augustine and his fellow believers would have read and the Manichaean hymns they would have sung were mostly Latin translations made either from the Greek or Syriac, or even directly from Coptic. We know from private letters found at Kellis the need for the Coptic Manichaeans to learn Latin (or 'Romaios' as they called it)[69] because of the high status of the language and its usefulness for 'business' purposes. One of the most interesting documents in the Bode Museum in Berlin is a Coptic handbook on how to conduct polite conversations in Latin. Although this 'Teach Yourself' book also used Greek, it shows that multi-lingualism in Roman Egypt also involved Latin.[70]

Because at the heart of Manichaeism was a dualism of Light and Darkness, of flesh and spirit, the religion could more readily answer one of the most persistent human problems, viz. Unde Malum? (Whence Evil?). In order to label Manichaeism as a Christian heresy and not as merely an exotic foreign religion, Christian polemicists had to stress the Christian roots and Roman links of the religion. Mani's Persian origins and his links with the Sasanian court could not easily be denied but a legend grew in the fourth century that he was a manumitted slave who acquired heterodox ideas from studying magical books belonging to his erstwhile master who brought him back to Persia while on his business trips to Roman Egypt. He then acquired a small number of disciples whom he sent to the Roman Empire who brought back Christian writings that Mani both plagiarized and perverted in his own canonical writings.[71] Becoming a 'Manichaean' in the Late Empire,

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[69] P. Kell. Copt. 25/26, edited and translated in *CDTK i*, 167.
[70] P10582 reproduced in translation by Staatliche Museen zu Berlin 1991: 80–1.
[71] On this see Lieu 1988: 69–88.

therefore, was like deserting one's own country to become a citizen of a 'theological' Persia, perpetually at war with the Romans. The mainly Syriac-speaking Christians in the Sasanian Empire who accused the Manichaeans of siding with the Sasanian authorities in times of persecution reversed the politico-geography of the polemics. A synodal pronouncement of the Church of the East made in 612 CE declared that Manichaeism originated in the Roman Empire and came to Persia – a land that had not hitherto known any form of heresy![72]

For the eastward diffusion of his teaching, Mani was consciously aware of the need to overcome two internal linguistic frontiers within the Sasanian Empire, namely the ones dividing Aramaic from Iranian and Middle Persian from Parthian. Mani was fortunate that Mār Ammō, one of his earliest disciples and leading missionaries, was probably bi- if not poly-lingual. The name Ammō is most likely to be an abridged form of ʿAmmānūēl, i.e. Emmanuel ('God with us'),[73] and Mār Ammō was also accompanied in his early missionary forays into the 'Upper Regions' by a Parthian nobleman. The latter was almost certainly a native speaker of the Parthian language and who probably knew some Aramaic. Their combined literary effort resulted in Parthian becoming a dominant religious language of the Manichaean communities east of the Tigris. One must remember that Parthian was then predominantly a spoken language. In Parthian administrative documents, thanks to scribal practices going back to Achaemenid times, many Aramaic ideograms were still used as 'masks' in much the same way that the modern Japanese language uses Chinese characters (*Kanji*) as 'masks' and which are pronounced according to the Japanese words behind them. The Manichaeans, on the other hand, introduced a cursive form of Aramaic akin to both Palmyrene and (later) Estrangela Syriac as the standard script of the writing and copying of their literature. This script follows closely the manner in which the words were actually pronounced and spelt in Parthian like the use of the *Hiragana* script in modern Japanese to replace certain *Kanji* 'masks'. We know that the Manichaean script was introduced very early in the history of the religion as a developed form of it was used in Roman Egypt in the fourth century.[74] In north-eastern Iran, the Manichaean script has the distinctive advantage over other written forms of Parthian then in use as it was strictly 'what you see is what you read' and does not employ Aramaic ideograms as 'masks'. The introduction of this 'reader-friendly'

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[72]   *Synodicon orientale ou recueil de synods nestoriens*, edited in Chabot 1902, 567.18–23 (Syriac text).
[73]   Gabain 1974: 319.
[74]   Pedersen and Larsen 2013.

script by the Manichaeans brought about a literary revolution in regions in which Parthian had remained a major dialect of Iranian despite the political dominance of the Sasanian dynasty with its preferred use of Middle Persian which also makes extensive use of Aramaic ideograms as 'masks'. It would be fair to say that Manichaean missionaries turned Parthian into a major literary language for the first time in the language's history. Although Parthians were Zoroastrians, we have hardly any example of Zoroastrian writings in Parthian other than theophoric personal names on inscriptions. Manichaean writings in Middle Persian were also translated in due course into Parthian, thus adding a new stratum of loan-words and transliterated names of deities to Central Asian Manichaeism.

As the religion moved eastward, it entered the realm of the Sogdian merchants who spoke an ancient dialect of Iranian. Manichaean texts in Parthian and Middle Persian were both translated into Sogdian. Given the fact that the Sogdian merchants had to be poly-lingual in order to excel in commerce in Central Asia, one would expect that Manichaean scriptures would eventually be translated with their help into languages spoken by peoples East of the Pamirs – languages such as Chinese and Old Turkish (Uighur).

Such an assumption, however, is over-simplistic. The task of translating complex religious texts from one well-developed language into another equally well-developed language cannot readily be undertaken by semi-literate merchants, not even in close collaboration with itinerant Manichaean Elect. What is needed is a tradition of literary translation and the entry of Manichaeism into the literary world of the Chinese owes an immeasurable debt to the diffusion of Buddhism, especially to the passage of Buddhist literature from Indic languages into Chinese. The work of the Tang pilgrim Xuanzang (*ca.* 602–64 CE) in collecting and translating Buddhist scriptures from Sanskrit and Pali is well known. The work of his earlier predecessor, the Saka or Scythian Kumārajīva (*ca.* 334–413 CE) from Kucha, is also well known to scholars of Chinese Buddhism. Less well remembered are the achievements of An Shigao 安世高 who appeared at the court of Emperor Huandi 桓帝 (146–168 CE) of the Han dynasty in Luoyang in 148 CE. His Chinese surname *An*安 signifies that he had come to China, perhaps as a fugitive, from Anxi 安息, i.e. the Parthian Empire (Anxi is derived from Arsak).[75] According to Chinese Buddhist hagiographical sources, he was said to have been a Parthian crown prince who

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[75] Anxi, the Chinese form of the name for the Parthian (Arsacid) Empire, is a good example of the *–r* to *–n* switch as highlighted by the study of Hamilton 1995.

abdicated the throne and dedicated his life to the study of religion *imitatio Buddhae.* He was most probably not a scion of the ruling Arsacid dynasty in Ctesiphon but descended from a Parthian vassal king in eastern Iran, perhaps in Merv or in Bukhara. An Shigao became important as the first known translator of Buddhist texts into Chinese. Texts that can safely be ascribed to him and his fellow Parthian collaborator, the layman An Xuan 安玄, all belong to the older Hinayana school of Buddhism and refer to meditation techniques and teachings on numerical categories. The quality of these translations is not high but they are important not just because they throw light on the appearance of Buddhism in the second century in China but because the Chinese language they used is closer to the daily language than to the literary Chinese of that period.[76] The texts that An Shigao and others translated into Chinese were originally written in Gandhari Prakrit, the language that was commonly used in the Kushan Empire which might have been An Shigao's ancestral home.[77] Although An Shigao's literary endeavours preceded those of Mani by more than a century, they laid the foundation for the translation of religious texts from Indo-European languages into Chinese.

Sogdian, because of its role as the *lingua franca* for commerce along the Silk Road, was certainly an important literary intermediary for the transmission of Manichaean as well as Nestorian Christian texts into Chinese. We possess bilingual wordlists in Parthian and Sogdian, which were a primitive form of dictionary used by Manichean scribes and translators.[78] We also occasionally have bilingual texts in which Middle Persian and/or Parthian were accompanied, phrase by phrase, by their Sogdian counterparts.[79]

Since 2013, the Australian Council has funded a research project in the form of a Discovery Project Outstanding Award (DORA) to the present author. This has enabled me to investigate the fascinating process of transmission of Manichaean texts from Syro-Aramaic into Chinese. The first conclusion of this project is that the bulk of the extant Manichaean material in Chinese, with the notable exception of the *Compendium* which was clearly composed originally in Chinese because of its purpose and subject matter, were translated directly from Parthian with the occasional nod to Sogdian and Old Turkish versions. The dominance of Parthian is underlined by the fact the phonetically transcribed hymns in the *Hymn-scroll* were almost all transcribed from Parthian with occasional words

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[76]   On An Shigao, his descendants and his achievements see Forte 1995.
[77]   Pulleyblank 1985: 1000.
[78]   Cf. Henning 1940.
[79]   See e.g. M17+M172, edited and translated in Mackenzie 1994: 183–98.

transcribed from Aramaic.[80] This confirms the fact that, thanks to the *Dīnāwarīya* movement, a high level of 'classical' Iranian scholarship survived in the Manichaean communities in Central Asia down to the end of the ninth century CE when Buddhism began to win over the ruling class of the Uighurs in modern Xinjiang who had been the main converts to Manichaeism. The scribes working in Manichaean communities at the eastern end of the Silk Road no doubt possessed word-lists in Parthian and Chinese just like the ones in Parthian and Sogdian, although none has so far been found. The scribes might have even possessed poly-lingual lexical lists of Manichaean terms like the ones which modern scholars endeavour to produce with the latest electronic means at our disposal.

One unexpected proof of our supposition that Parthian was the dominant language for the transmission of Manichaean texts from Iran to China has come from a most unlikely recent discovery. Earlier, two back-to-back major Discovery Project grants from the Australian Research Council (2000–2002 and 2003–2008) enabled an Australian team under my direction to investigate a known Manichaean site in the coastal province of Fujian which had the world's sole extant Manichaean shrine. The final reports, published in 2012, underline the importance of this coastal region for the concealment of foreign religions, especially Manichaeism and Nestorian Christianity, after their official expulsion from China in the so-called Huichang 會昌 Persecutions of the mid-ninth century CE – the Chinese equivalent of the Great Persecution of Diocletian.[81] The story, however, did not end with the publication of our final reports because, while the Australian scholars were busy writing the reports and sorting out the hundreds of digital photographs taken over a period of eight years of regular site-visits, an intriguing and major textual discovery was made by Chinese scholars between 2010 and 2012 in the village of Xiapu 霞浦, in the very same province of Fujian.[82] The find consists of a hidden hoard of religious texts in Chinese script of Manichaean provenance copied as late as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries CE. Some of the hymns in Chinese translation have preserved very distinctive Parthian forms in transliteration, and one which reflects its Syro-Aramaic origin is that for 'Jesus the Buddha': *Yishuhe fo* 夷數和佛. At first glance this four-character term can mean 'Jesus the Buddha of Peace *or* Tranquility'. However, there is no such epithet as 'the Buddha of Peace'

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[80] On this see especially Yoshida 1983: 326–31.

[81] The final reports can now be consulted in Lieu et al. 2012.

[82] Much of the discussion on the Xiapu material is in Chinese. See e.g. Ma Xiaohe 2010: 119–30 and Ma Xiaohe 2009: 81–108. [Republished in: Richter et al. 2015: 228–58.] See also the important survey of the finds given in Kósa 2011: 22–31.

for Jesus in the Manichaean pantheon. What we have here in actual fact is a rare example of the preservation of the final Syriac letter *ain* which is all too evident in the correct form of the name of Jesus, viz. Joshu*a*, which in Syriac is *yšw'*. Even more amazing is that among this extraordinary manuscript-find from Xiapu are texts consisting of line after line of seemingly meaningless characters in Chinese. We have here clearly characters being used phonetically to transliterate foreign names or phrases. However, Professor Yoshida Yutaka FBA, a noted research scholar in Middle Iranian, especially in Sogdian and Parthian, concluded that these texts are phonetic transliterations of Parthian, and consist mainly of hymns, some of which we know from Parthian texts from Turfan first studied by German scholars almost exactly a century ago. The Parthians, Rome's most persistent and powerful enemy from the time of the *triumvir* Marcus Crassus to the Emperor Caracalla, had left few traces of their language in their contact with Rome except on coin legends along the Eastern Frontier because of their Philhellenism and the predominance of Greek as the *lingua franca* of the Near East during the first two centuries of Our Era. Eighty per cent or more of all known literary remains of the Parthian language is in the form of Manichaean texts.[83] The other fifteen per cent is mainly in economic documents from Nisa[84] and in Parthian versions of Sasanian royal inscriptions, especially the trilingual inscription of Shapur I (*Res Gestae Divi Saporis*).[85] In this we have to thank the Manichaeans, the 'Serpent from Persia', for helping to preserve the national language of the Parthian Empire long after its decline and fall through their stubborn maintenance of it as a Church language in their far-flung communities in Chinese Turkestan. The 'Serpent from Persia' has provided a rare linguistic bridge between Rome and China which few scholars would have suspected or expected to find.

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Abbreviations

CDTK i = **Gardner**, I. (ed. and trans.) 1999. *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis,* Vol. 1. Oxford.

CJ = P. **Krüger**, P. (ed.) 1954. *Codex Justinianus*. 11th edition. Revised by W. Kunkel. Berlin.

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[83] Thus, the work of Durkin-Meisterernst 2004 is effectively the principal dictionary of the Parthian language.

[84] Diakonoff and Livshits 2001.

[85] For the Parthian version of the trilingual text, see Huyse 1999: I, 22–64, col. 1.

CT = **Mommsen**, T. and **Meyer**, P.M. (eds.) 1905. *Codex Theodosianus*. 2 Vols. Berlin.

Keph. = **Polotsky**, H.J., **Böhlig**, A. and **Funk**, W.-P. (eds. and transs.) 1940f. *Kephalaia*. Stuttgart.

KLT i = **Gardner**, I. (ed. and trans.) 1996. *Kellis Literary Texts*, Vol. 1. Oxford.

KLT ii = **Gardner**, I. (ed. and trans.) 2007. *Kellis Literary Texts*, Vol. 2. Oxford.

MTRE = **Gardner**, I. and **Lieu**, S.N.C. (trans.) 2004. *Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire*. Cambridge.

SPAW = *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*. 1882–1949. Berlin (Berlin, 1882–1921; philos.-hist. Kl., 1922–49)

T = *Taishō shinshu daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. 1924–29. Tokyo.

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Archaeology of Eurasian Empires

9 | Alans in the Southern Caucasus?

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Introduction

The Caucasus is a frontier like few others. Dominated by a formidable mountain chain and wedged between the Black and Caspian Seas, this isthmus effectively separates two worlds – the steppes of Eastern Europe from the highlands of Western Asia. Yet these physical mountains rarely thwarted communication. Rather they stand as a cultural bridgehead, cleaved by a number of major routes, including the Dariel Gorge (or *Dar-e Alān*, Gate of the Alans), which skirts the base of Mount Kazbegi.[1] Since remote antiquity the geographical circumstance of the Caucasus has ensured its position at the intersection of cultures. The Late Antique period was no exception. With its southern territories situated on the fringe of the Roman Empire and Sasanian Iran, and its northern lands edging Hunnic influence, it comes as no surprise that the Caucasus nurtured its own distinctive borderland culture.

When the Huns surged onto the vast steppes of western Eurasia around 370 CE, causing massive social dislocation at the beginning of the Migration period, they were confronted by a multitude of peoples. Among them were the Alans, a steppe people who occupied the plains between the Don and the Volga Rivers.[2] According to classical writers, the Alans were Iranian speakers related to other northern groups such as the Sarmatians and the descendants of the Scythians (Saka), who also lived in the territory.[3] The Alans eventually succumbed to the unyielding onslaught of the Huns and were divided into two groups. One half, the European Alans, travelled west, caught up in the movement of peoples that crisscrossed a wide area.[4] The other group, the Caucasian Alans, moved from their homeland north of the Black Sea to settle in the Crimea

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[1] On physical geography, see Volodicheva 2002; on historical geography, especially the role of mountain passes, see Braund 1994: 40–72.

[2] Alemany 2000; Bachrach 1967: 476–89; Heather 1998, 2014; Kim 2013 *passim*.

[3] See, for instance, Seneca *Thyestes* 630; Ptolemy, *Geographia* 6.14.3, 9, 11. See Aruz 2000 for the archaeology of the Sarmatians and Scythians.

[4] Bachrach 1973.

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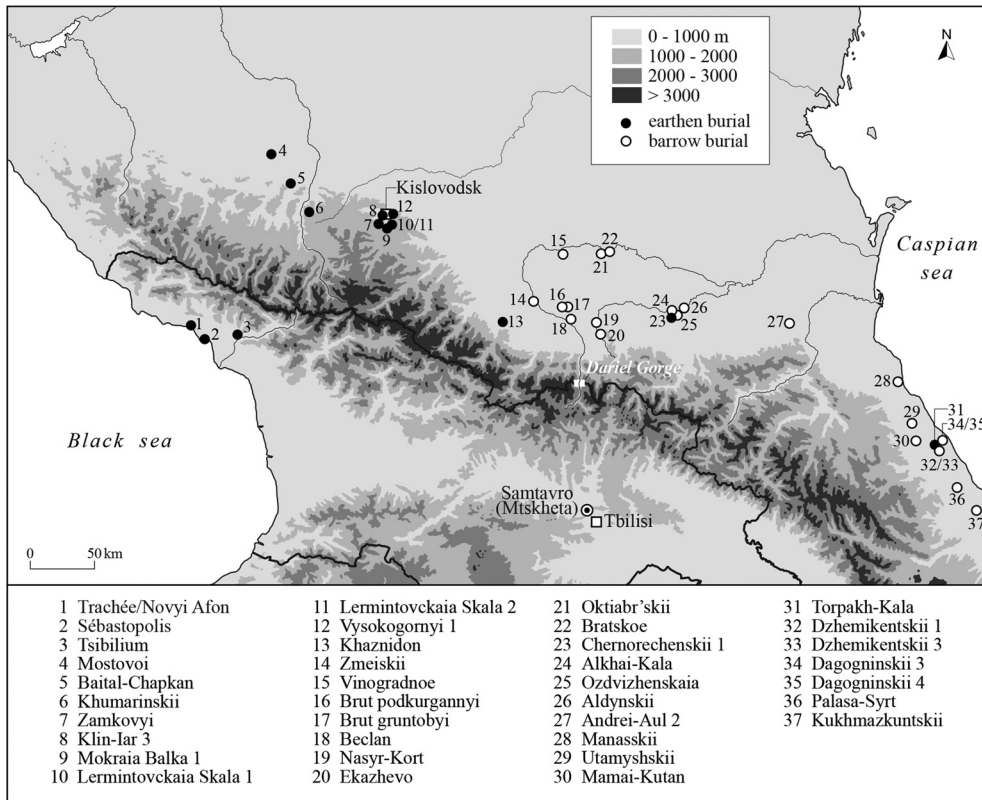
Map 9.1 Map showing the location of Samtavro in relation to key sites in the northern Caucasus (created by Chandra Jayasuriya)

and the northern Caucasus, often taken as the southernmost boundary of their cultural zone (Map 9.1).[5]

The Alans were renowned warriors, aided in no small part by their skill on horseback. Depending on historical circumstances, they allied themselves to the Romans, Parthians or Sasanians.[6] Away from the battlefield, the Alans were mobile cattle-breeders, a highly specialized form of subsistence economy positioned at one end of the spectrum of economic strategies.[7] Their equestrian abilities never diminished, but when they moved to the northern Caucasus their settlements clustered within the drainage basin of the Kuban River and they assumed a more sedentary lifestyle

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[5] Abramova 2005.

[6] Josephus *Jewish Wars* 7.244–251.

[7] For a discussion of the varieties of pastoral economies, see Khazanov 1984: 19–25; for a critical review of the concept of nomadism, see Potts 2014: 1–46.

(agro-pastoralism). 'The Alan king (can) muster 30,000 horsemen', wrote Masʿudi, an early Arab historian: '[h]e is very powerful, very strong and influential (among?) the kings. The kingdom consists of an uninterrupted series of settlements; when the cock crows (in one of them), the answer comes from the other parts of the kingdom, because the villages are intermingled and close together.'[8]

Shortly after their move to the northern Caucasus, the Alans crossed the mountains and conducted forays into the southern regions. In 450 CE they devastated Georgia whose king, Vakhtang, was just ten years old.[9] Six years later, accompanied by Persian allies, Vakhtang confronted the Alans in a mighty battle on the Aragvi River.[10]

Mtskheta, a multi-ethnic town at the confluence of the Aragvi and Kura Rivers, near Tbilisi, in central Georgia, was the dynamic heart of the Iberian Kingdom in the Caucasus.[11] On Mtskheta's outskirts is Samtavro, its burial ground, a large area covering approximately 20 hectares (Map 9.2, Figure 9.1). Harbouring some 4,400 tombs, documented since investigations first began in 1871, Samtavro is one of the largest cemeteries in the Caucasus.[12] Its longevity of use, reaching from the Bronze Age through the Late Antique, and the diversity of its burials customs are also remarkable features.

The aim of this chapter is to consider the novel rituals and associated paraphernalia that appeared in the last cultural phase at the cemetery of Samatvro, dated between the first to sixth centuries. We will attempt to answer, no matter how provisionally, the question posed in the title. Are the new elements that occur in the Late Roman and Late Antique periods intrusive? Whether or not Samtavro can be linked to either the adoption of northern steppe traditions (loosely termed 'Hunnic' and more precisely Alanic), or possibly even to a limited arrival of immigrant groups, such as a military and political elite, we are dealing with a topic that has received next to no attention in archaeological discourse south of the mountain range.

Before we turn to the evidence, a word about terminology. What constitutes 'Late Roman', 'Late Antiquity' and 'Early Mediaeval' in different

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[8] From Minorsky 1958: 156–60.

[9] Rapp 2014: 283–6. See also Miller 2004 on the Alans in Georgia.

[10] According to Rapp 2014: 285, n. 51, it is unclear whether this is the modern Aragvi River that flows past Mtskheta or whether it represents a tributary of the Terek River in the northern Caucasus.

[11] On the complex ethnic mix of Caucasian Iberia, see Rapp 2009, 2014.

[12] Sadradze 1997: 4.
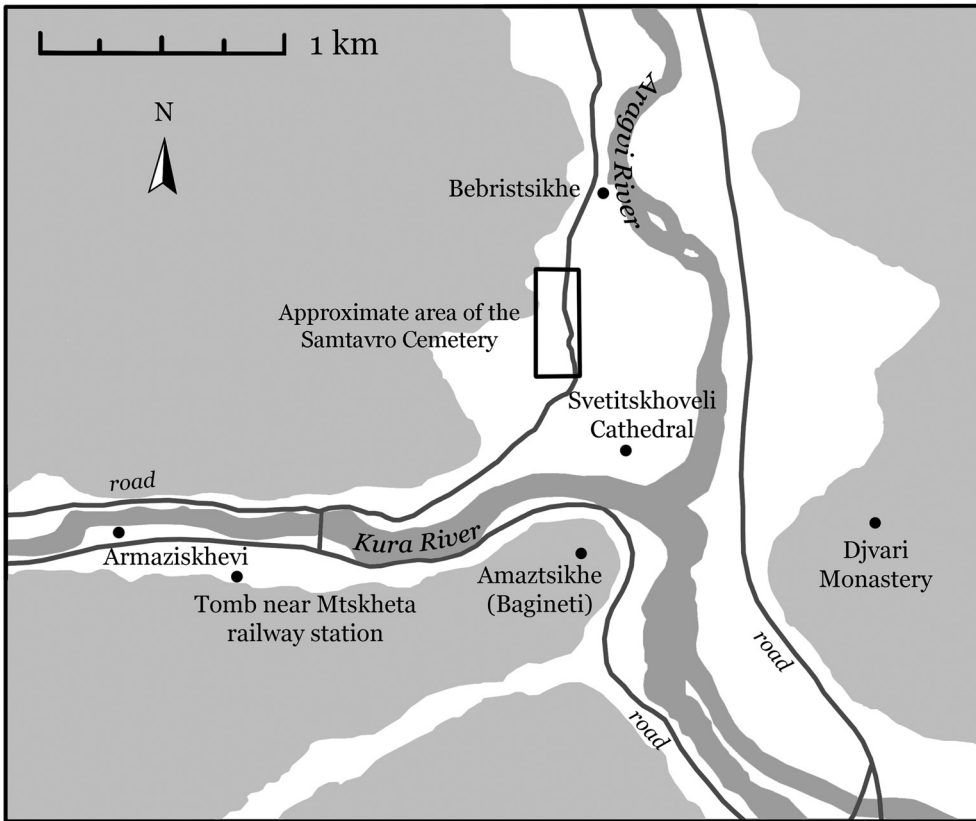
Map 9.2 The location of Samtavro at the confluence of the Kura and Aragvi Rivers (after Sagona et al. 2010a).

cultural areas and in absolute terms is a matter of some debate, especially in a region like the Caucasus, which straddles Eurasia and the Near East.[13] Here we follow the Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity in assigning the period between 250 CE and 750 CE to the 'Late Antique' of the Near East.[14]

[13] The term 'Late Roman' can be quite a loose expression stretching from the Augustan reform around 27 BCE to CE 476, when the last Roman Emperor in the west, Romulus Augustulus, was removed from power. For some historians, though, the Roman Imperial period ended with Diocletian's reforms in 284 CE, after which late Antiquity begins. *Cf.* Brown (1971), who sees 150 CE as the genesis of Late Antiquity. This is further complicated by archaeology, which subdivides the period on the basis of material culture; see Eggers 1955. For many archaeologists 375 CE defines the beginning of the Migration period. *Cf.* the chronological chart in Bogucki and Crabtree 2004: xxiii–xxvi and subsequent chapters.

[14] Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity.
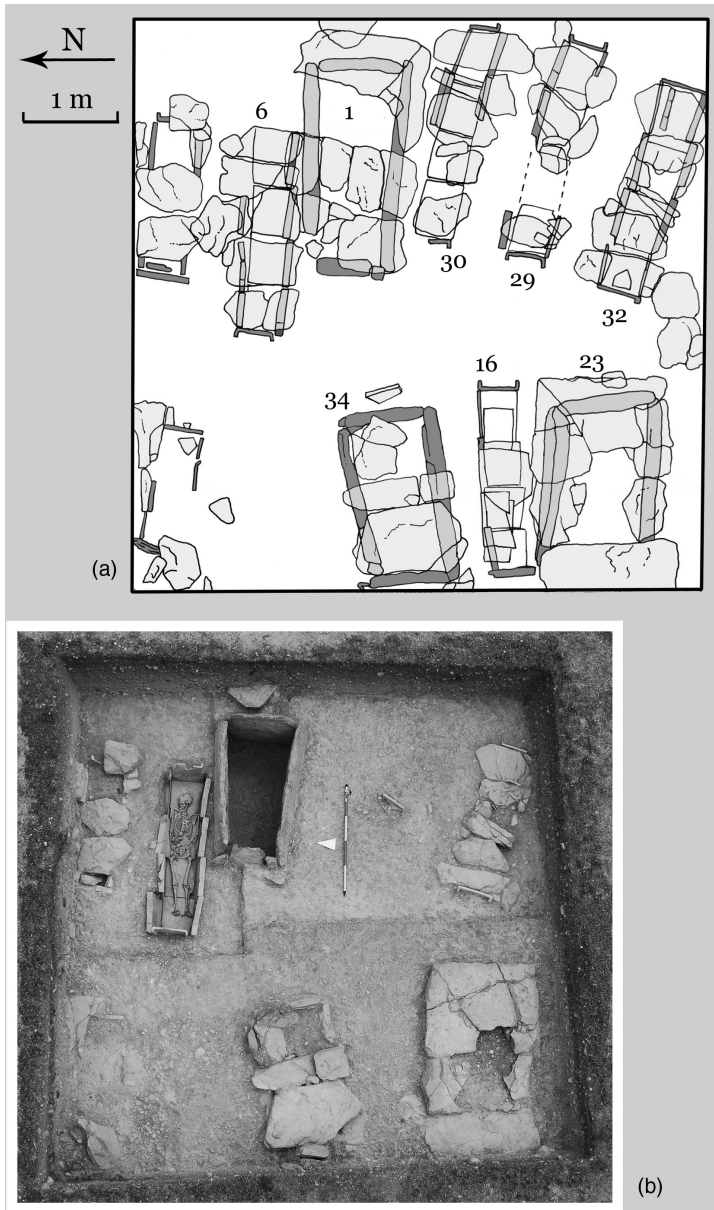
Figure 9.1 (a) Samtavro cemetery, plan of Area 143, Square 12; (b) Aerial view of Area 143, Square 12, showing proximity of tile-lined and stone cist graves, and the broken capping stones on unexcavated graves (from Sagona et al. 2010a)

Table 9.1 Table showing the cultural timeline for the Caucasus during the Late Roman to Early Medieval periods (after Reinhold and Korobov 2007 and Sagona et al. 2010a)

Mediterranean and Near East *Periods & Timeline*		The Northern Caucasus *Archaeological Cultures & Timeline*			The Southern Caucasus *Samtavro*	
Early Medieval	AD 1000 AD 750	900	Clash between Khazars & Arabs, and migrations	EARLY ALANIC		? EARTHEN PITS ?
Late Antique	AD 250	750	Clash between Byzantium & Sasanian Iran			
		450 380	Hunnic campaigns & displacement and movement of people		Stone cist tombs	
Roman Imperial	31 BC	150	Pre-Hunnic Period	LATE SARMATIAN	Tile-lined tombs	
Late Hellenistic	100 BC		Late Iron Age		Area 118 (Zoroastrian Building?)	

How this interlude relates to cultural periods assigned in the northern Caucasus is shown in Table 9.1. The main periods and events to note for that region are:

(a) Before the Hunnic conquest (ca. 250–375 CE);
(b) The displacement and movement of peoples associated with the Hunnic campaigns and the Migration period (ca. 376–550s CE);
(c) The clash between Byzantium and Sasanian Iran (ca. 500–628 CE);
(d) Migrations caused by the confrontation between the Khazar Khaganate and the Arabs (ca. 750–900 CE).[15]

Here we shall be concerned mainly with the first two periods. Later in this chapter, we will evaluate a series of radiocarbon readings derived from

[15] Korobov 2012: 54.

secure archaeological samples, and explain how these reckonings fit in with conventional cultural and historiographical periods.

Cultures and Traditions, Ethnicities and Identities

Change in mortuary practice can be easily discerned in the archaeological record. Interpreting the social processes and events that underlay the shift, however, is a far more taxing task. In very many respects, the evidence at Samtavro is so varied that it touches on a series of key issues and concepts germane to current archaeological discourse: the capacity of archaeology to distinguish between identities and ethnicities, the notion of culture, the transfer of ideas versus the migration of people, cultural hybridity and entanglement, to mention just a few.

Before we look at the material remains it is worthwhile to briefly define a few of the concepts that are most relevant to this exercise. At the core is the notion of culture, the most fundamental and arguably the most complex concept in anthropology. Quintessentially, 'culture' refers to the multiplicity of ways – shared values, thoughts, beliefs and actions – that distinguish members of a social group. That said, and given the diversity of social experiences an individual has, 'living cultures' should not be viewed as unitary and well circumscribed entities, but rather seen as pluralistic units best understood within their own historical context.[16] It is also often argued that cultural identity – the way a community perceives itself – is at its most salient when a culture confronts the 'other'.[17] In this respect, borderlands offer ideal settings to study identities, as Barth's influential study has shown.[18] The modern Caucasus is riddled with borders, some quite restive. It is a region where labels, whether social or religious, are hotly contested.[19] It is also where, during the Soviet period, ethnic groups searched for their social identity deep in the prehistoric past, in an attempt to outdo their neighbours in relation to indigeneity.

For the archaeologist, the conundrum should be apparent. How can a culture be identified through its material remains? Nearly a century ago, V.G. Childe presciently noted that, 'we find certain types of remains – pots, implements, ornaments, burial rites, house forms – constantly recurring together. Such a complex of regularly associated traits we shall term a

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[16] Rapport 2014: 92–102.
[17] Jones 1996: 67.
[18] Barth 1969.
[19] For an incisive examination of the 'creation' of identities in the Caucasus, see Shnirelman 2001.

"cultural group" or just a "culture". We assume that such a complex is the material expression of what would today be called a "people." '[20] This is a useful definition of an 'archaeological culture' that emphasizes its holistic nature, and distinguishes it from a 'horizon' – a fashion or trend, often represented as the adoption of a single artefact type or cluster of types over a wide geographical area.[21] Modern examples of a material culture 'horizon' include jeans and Coca-Cola, both American icons but now commanding a global presence.[22] Even so, Childe's definition of cultures is limited, especially in its implication that they are discrete and well bounded. None the less, in archaeology a frontier that separates persistent and marked differences in material culture – house plans and tomb types, settlement layout and ecological settings, crafts and cuisine – is most likely also a robust cultural boundary. But we must be cautious, whenever possible, not to conflate the 'archaeological culture' of a political hegemony from of the variety of 'living cultures' and ethnicities that made up the hegemony.

Related to this is the correlation between ethnic identity and physical characteristics of a population, which remains a hotly debated point in Hunnic studies. Susanne Hakenbeck encapsulates the divergent views very aptly:

In German-speaking archaeology, ethnicity and biological group affiliation are frequently considered to be the same thing. Much of German-speaking archaeology is situated within the 'ethnic paradigm', according to which ethnicity is an essentially unproblematic social category that can be identified by certain elements of material culture or by morphological characteristics of the skeleton. Changes in material culture are therefore easily attributed to the migrations of ethnic groups. British archaeologists, on the other hand, have, in the past three decades, adopted an anti-migrationist position that favours the idea of autochthonous developments. In parallel, ethnicity came to be seen as an identity – as an internal sense of belonging – and the possibility of accessing it through material culture was thus considered limited.[23]

The reluctance to engage with the concept of migration is because it 'has been mystified as a phenomenon that is difficult to detect archaeologically, that occurred sporadically and unpredictably in the past, and that therefore is not amenable to uniformitarian or scientific explanation.'[24] The study of migrations, including those of text-less societies, is once again being pursued with

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[20] Childe 1929: v–vi.
[21] Anthony 2007: 130–2.
[22] Miller and Woodward 2010.
[23] Hakenbeck 2009: 65.
[24] Anthony 1997: 21.

considerable energy, especially with the new insights of population movements provided by ancient DNA.[25] Drawing on the studies of demographers, geographers and economic historians, who have never had an issue with the concept, archaeologists now view migrations largely as a social process. The movement of peoples has less to do, for instance, with population pressure in the home region, an oft-cited stimulus, but embraces a range of issues such as work opportunities and labour demands, and changes in kinship structures that cause some groups to fission and emigrate. According to Anthony, a useful way of modelling migration is to think of 'push' and 'pull' factors. The former are seen as negative circumstances in the homeland, whereas the latter are attractions in a new region.[26] Within this web of concepts and methods we must never lose sight of the émigrés, or the person behind the artefact. How individuals (agents) can purposefully work within or change a system through their actions reflects their capacity and power (agency).[27]

Samtavro: the Archaeological Evidence

After the occasional burial in the third millennium BCE, the Samtavro cemetery was intensely used in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages (ca. 1,200–700 BCE), and again in the Late Roman and Late Antique periods.[28] As one of the first sites investigated under the auspices of Russian Tsarist archaeology in the nineteenth century, Samtavro holds an important place in the history of Caucasian archaeology. It is also one of the most continuously studied sites, having seen extensive explorations during the period of the Cold War, and more recently in post-Soviet times, in a collaborative project between Georgian and Australian researchers. These investigations can be grouped into four expeditions: Samtavro I (1871–1878); Samtavro II (1938–1961): Samatvro III (1976–1986, 2000–2002); Samatvro IV (2008–2010), part of the umbrella Georgian-Australian Investigations in Archaeology (GAIA) project.

Matters discussed here are based on evidence recovered from 1,075 tombs assigned to the Late Roman and Late Antique periods by the

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[25] Haak et al. 2015.

[26] Anthony 1990, 1997.

[27] Barrett 1994; Dobres and Robb 2000; Hodder and Hutson 2003; Miller 2008, 2009.

[28] For a synthesis of the Bronze Age tombs, see Sadradze 1997. For the main published field reports of the Samatvro III campaigns on the Late Antique period, see Apakidze et al. 1955; Apakidze 1978, 1980, 1981, 1985, 1996; for Samtavro IV campaigns, see Sagona et al. 2010a, 2010b. There is also a vast collection of unpublished archival data pertaining to Samtavro III, which we have been fortunate to access.

Samtavro III and IV expeditions. A combination of legacy data, recent fieldwork and scientific analyses offers reasonably detailed documentation. The most extensive source is the archival material of the Samtavro III campaigns. Following conventional Soviet field practices, each excavated grave has an individual folder, containing descriptions from a variety of specialists on the excavation process and findings, as well as plans, illustrations and photographs. To enhance the usability of this extensive information, the results from the Samtavro III and IV expeditions have been collected and arranged in a relational database, the *Samtavro Tomb Database*, which is designed to return results specifically related to tomb architecture and human remains, as well as grave accoutrements.[29] This now functions as a searchable digital archive. Of the 1,075 tombs documented by the Samtavro III and IV expeditions, information is available on the internal contents for 923 graves.[30] Recent research has identified 839 graves with associated human remains, accounting for 1,249 individuals, and at least 5,842 individual objects associated with the graves, to which we will return.

Tamila Mgalobishvili and Iulon Gagoshidze maintain that Late Antique Samtavro is a Jewish cemetery in a fledgling Christian state, which catered for the needs of the diaspora in the early centuries CE.[31] We do not agree with this view, which is built around a strict historical framework (connected with immigrants of the First and Second Jewish Wars) and which does not engage in a nuanced analysis of the archaeological remains.[32] Notwithstanding the well attested history of Jews in Georgia and that some of the burials might be Jewish, we would argue that the heterogeneous nature of the Samtavro material assemblage reflects religious pluralism borne by complex social processes that involved the comingling of peoples, belief systems and cultural traditions. Although Christianity spread rapidly amongst the Georgian nobility and some

[29] On research methodologies and results, see Michalewicz 2015.

[30] The shortfall in information for 152 tombs pertains to the Samtavro III campaigns. No folders were created for 125 tombs that were documented, but not excavated. A further twenty-seven tomb folders were created but have since been misplaced. The Samatvro IV campaigns excavated fifty-three tombs, all fully documented.

[31] Magloblishvili and Gagoshidze 1998: 50–1, 56.

[32] A handful of Aramaic and Hebrew inscriptions have been found at Samtavro, but Magloblishvili and Gagoshidze's main argument rests on the non-Christian position of the head, pointing east, and the adoption of local stone cist tombs that, they maintain, replicate the use of ossuaries in Jewish tradition. Ossuaries in the Levant, connected with the Jewish custom of *ossilegium*, however, were mostly small, stone boxes and hardly similar to the large stone cists dug into earth at Samtavro (see Rahmani 1994). Moreover, supine burials, which account for a small proportion at Samtavro, cannot be taken exclusively as a Jewish indicator.

of the general population, the burial grounds at Samtavro indicate that non-Christian practices endured with some tenacity and continued to be absorbed as political circumstances changed. Iranian influences, for instance, are discernable in the cultural mix. Literature of the time bears out the religious tension between the followers of Zoroaster, worshippers of the solar divinity, and the converts to Christianity.[33] Material evidence of this pluralism includes the imagery of Graeco-Roman gods shown on engraved intaglios and cast designs on finger rings.[34] Other representations hint at solar divinities, perhaps Helios (pointed stars, figure riding in horse drawn chariot).[35] The sun with lunar crescent, scorpions and rams heads also reflect astronomical observations and astrological interpretations.[36] Here we shall deal only with the Alanic influences.

Eight tomb types based on distinct structural features can be discerned at Samtavro: earthen pit, tile-lined, stone cist, pithos, dressed stone, composite, clay sarcophagus and stone with gable roof (Figures 9.2, 9.3). The spatial distribution of the graves does not reflect an obvious plan – there are no paths or obvious clusters, for instance. The only commonality they share is the maximization of space: they are packed together, at times even stratified. And many tombs are aligned on an east–west axis. In some instances, the type is unknown, owing to past or modern disturbance, or to a lack of precise information. Of the eight tomb types, we shall focus on the main attributes of the best represented: earthen pits, tile-lined, and stone cists. These are presented here in roughly chronological order in so far as earthen pits have a long history extending back into the Bronze Age, and chronometric evidence indicates that tile-lined tombs preceded stone cists (see below). Earthen pits

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[33] Rapp 2014; Rayfield 2013; Gamkrelidze 2012: 121–38. On Christian iconography in Georgia, see Machabeli 2013: 83–4; Magloblishvili and Gagoshidze 1998: 56–7. Among the Christian symbols found at Samtavro, we have two finger rings with fish motifs. These were both excavated from stone cist tombs: Michalewicz 2015, Art. 0071/160 (fig. 12.257) is silver and sardonyx, whereas Art. 0970/2926 is made of iron and sardonyx. On religious plurality, see Braund 1994. It is possible that the complex in Area 118 at Samtavro, which includes a clean, large room with fixed circular hearth, has connections with Zoroastrian ritual; see Sagona et al. 2010a: 51–3.

[34] Michalewicz 2015, Art. 0187/396 (fig. 12.233): Artemisian fire on ring intaglio; Art. 0905/2702 (fig. 12.249): intaglio with the figure of Athena; Art. 0984/Unnumbered: featuring engraving of Nike.

[35] Horses are also engraved on gems. For example, Michalewicz 2015, Art. 0186/371 is a horse with raised foreleg (fig. 12.274); Art. 0218/952 also features a horse (fig. 12.276). This iconography is well known in Mithraism in which horses represent the four directions of the wind, with the four steeds pulling the chariot through the heavens.

[36] On astrological symbols, see Michalewicz 2015, Art. 0186/367 (fig. 12.241): crescent moon and seven pointed star; Art. 0081/199 (figs 12.236 and 12.237): ram or sheep on ring bezel; Art. 0705/2353 (not illustrated): a scorpion design.
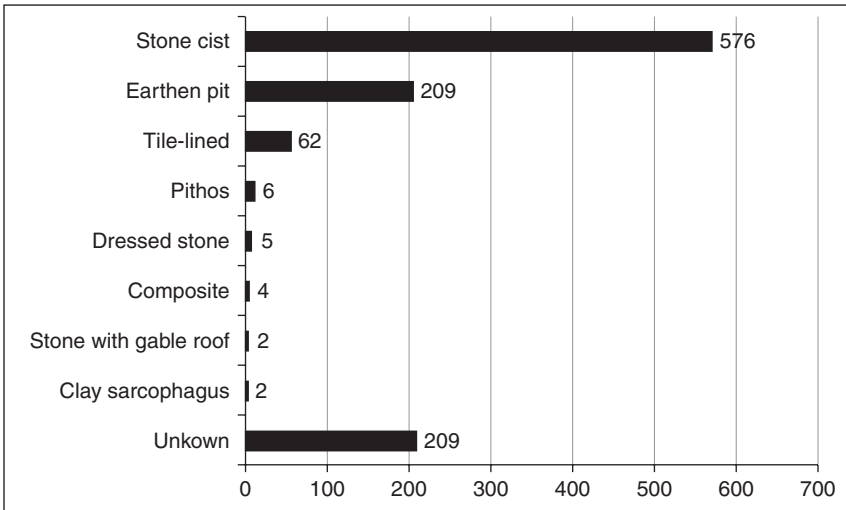
Figure 9.2 Samtavro cemetery tomb types for the Late Roman to Late Antique periods (*n* = 1,075)

for this period are not, however, well anchored with absolute dates at present, with only one radiocarbon date from the nearby site of Tchkandiskedi, which also has a good example of a clay sarcophagus (Figure 9.3(d)).

Earthen Pits

These were the simplest mode of burial, and account for 209 documented burials. Pits tombs were long and narrow, though children's graves were smaller and round in form. The graves were dug into the ground and then backfilled with an earth and stone conglomerate, with small sandstone slabs arranged over the top. On occasion, ceramic tiles, or both stone and ceramic slabs, covered this grave type. A number of patterns are identified with the capping of the earthen pits. For example, while the position of the largest stone varied – it may have been placed at the centre or at one end – the remaining stones or ceramic pieces were clearly arranged in a sequential manner according to size. Moreover, a stone or ceramic marker indicated the position of the grave.

As noted, this tomb type appears in a great variety of sizes, ranging from 25 cm to over 225 cm in length. Examples include Tomb 18, measuring 210 × 51 × 48 cm, and Tomb 11, at little more than 30 × 30 × 10 cm. Earthen pits are comparatively shallow, and generally reveal individuals extended on their backs with hands positioned to their face, sides, or abdomen. But other mortuary ritual is also observable. Occasionally individuals
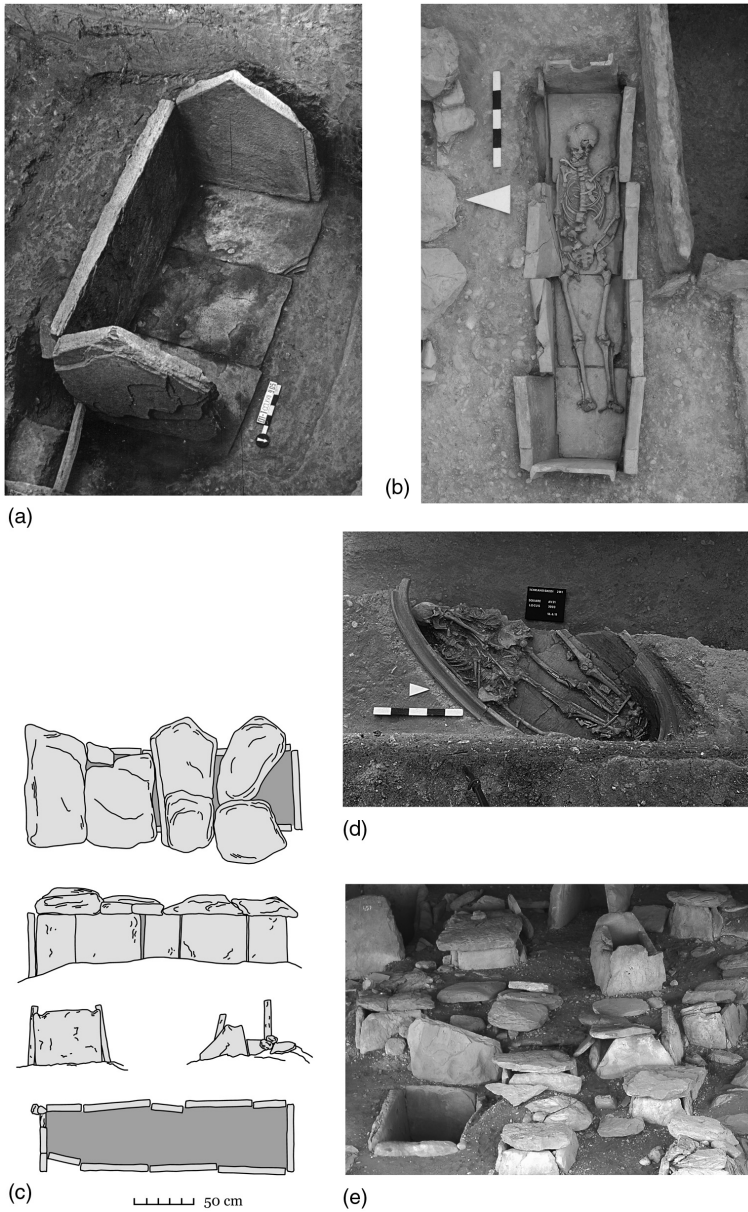
Figure 9.3 Samtavro and Tchkantiskedi Late Roman Late Antique tomb types (a) Stone with gable roof, Tomb 905 (Apakidze and Nikolaishvili 1994 or Samtavro III); (b) Tile-lined, Tomb 6 (GAIA IV); (c) Stone cist, Tomb 382 (Samtavro III); (d) Tchkantiskedi, clay sarcophagus damaged by modern military trench, Area AV21; (e) View across stone cist graves investigated by Samtavro III campaign (photographs (b), (d), (e) by A. Sagona 2009)

are semi-flexed, and there is at least one instance of a tightly flexed burial. Remains could also be disarticulated, as in Tomb 7. In the case of Tomb 33, adult and juvenile post-cranial material was squeezed into a pit. These burials are predominately used for single interments with 81.82 per cent of graves containing one individual only, though there is one earthen pit containing up to four individuals.

Tile-Lined Tombs (Figures 9.3(b)–(c); 9.4(e); 9.5(b))

Sixty-two tile-lined tombs have been documented. They are long and narrow, defined along all edges by terracotta tiles – usually *tegulae* or plinths and rarely *imbrices*. The base was also tile-lined, at times earthen, but usually with four tiles placed on the ground, flat surface facing up. Owing to the lack of any sort of mortar, the walls of these tombs were not stable and the tiles were often dislodged. Roughly worked rectangular stones (and sometimes ceramic tiles) were laid across the upright tiles, frequently overhanging their edges, and sealing the grave. A square stone placed near the head or just offset from the centre acted as a marker. On the whole, tile-lined tombs were oriented east–west. The preferred mode of inhumation was the supine position, as in Tomb 30, with the head of the deceased pointing east and hands placed on the abdomen. In this particular case, a juvenile (3–4 years) was carefully nestled on the left femur of the adult female (20–30 years). But the norm was single burials: 64.52 per cent of tile-lined tombs contained one individual only, representing 54.05 per cent of total number of individuals recovered from this tomb type. In some instances, such as Tomb 32, there is evidence of secondary ritual. Here the skeletal remains were moved from the original position and clustered at the western end of the tomb. Long bones were intentionally aligned lengthwise, crossed along the top with a single bone, and superimposed by a jumble of disarticulated bones (in the upper layer).[37]

Stone Cist Tombs (Figures 9.3(e); 9.4(a)–(d))

This is the best-represented tomb type, accounting for 576 examples. Rectangular in plan, deep and generally aligned east to west, these tombs are built from roughly worked sandstone slabs, quarried from outcrops not far from the site. Four large slabs set upright into the ground lined the walls of a pit and defined the tomb's edge. Roofs were usually capped with three

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[37] Sagona et al. 2010a: 23.
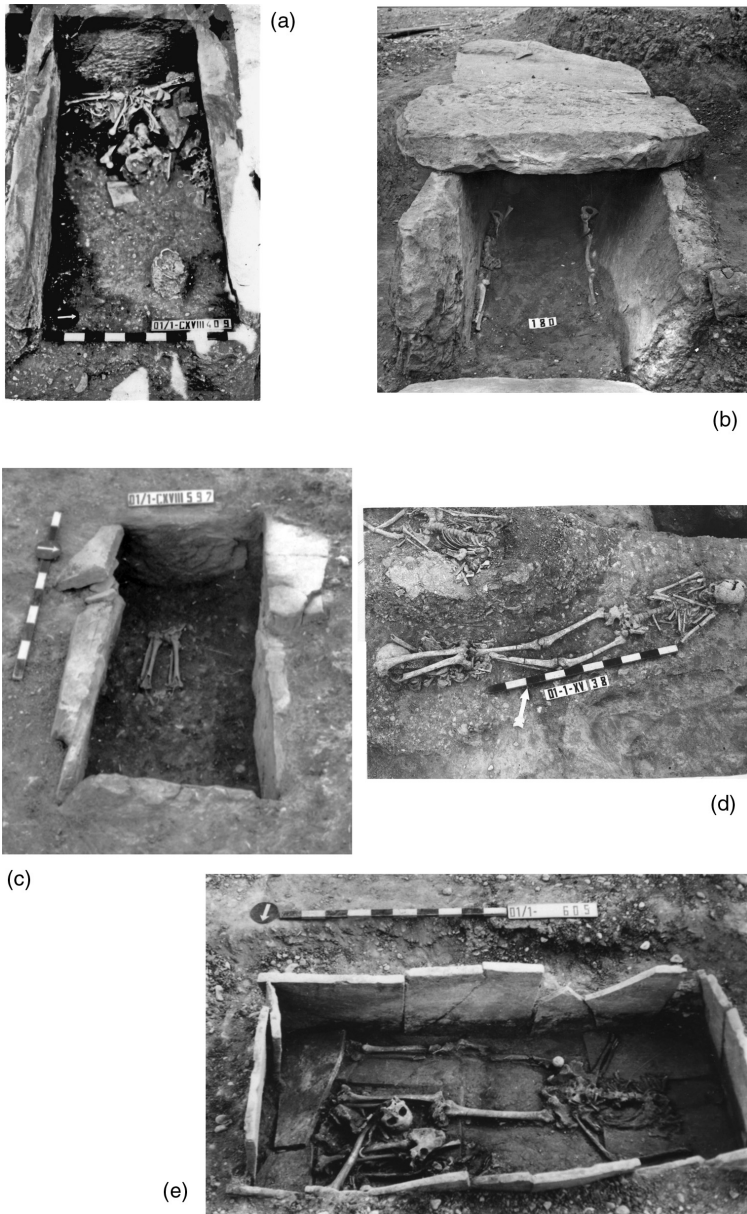
Figure 9.4 Samtavro III, human skeletal remains in post-depositional arrangements: (a) Tomb 409; (b) Tomb 180; (c) Tomb 597; (d) Tomb 138; (e) Tomb 605 (Samtavro III archives)

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)
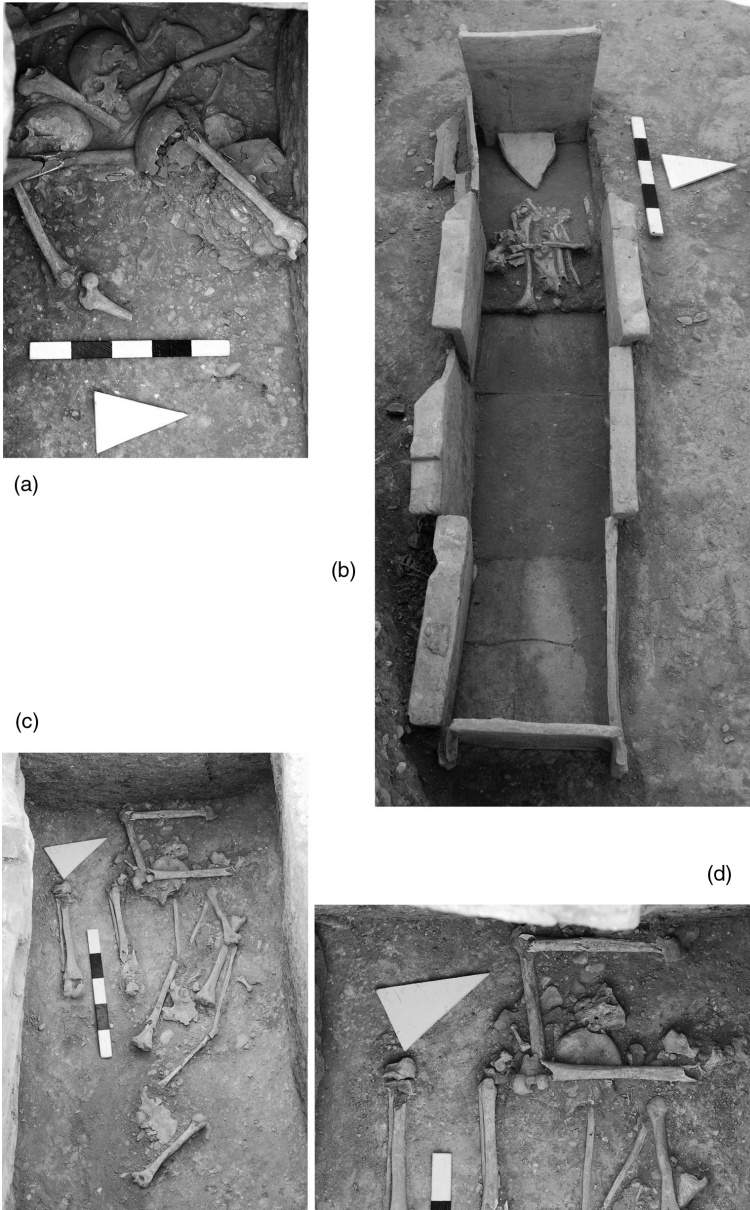
Figure 9.5 Samtavro IV, human skeletal remains in post-depositional arrangements: (a) Stone cist, Tomb 1; (b) Tomb 32; (c)–(d) Stone cist, Tomb 3 (after Sagona et al. 2010a)

large stones, often hanging over the edges of the upright slabs, and positioned so that the two largest were placed at the western and eastern ends (the head and the foot of the grave). The floor of the tomb was left earthen and flat. Dimensions varied, but Tomb 2, excavated during the GAIA expedition, can be taken as representative of size – length 192 cm, width 116 cm and depth 70 cm. Unlike the tile-lined graves, stone cist tombs often had collective burials. Although single interments were represented in 47.22 per cent of the tombs, these individuals account for only 30.67 per cent of skeletons excavated from this tomb type. And whereas tile-lined tombs held between one and four interments, stone cist tombs containing between five and twelve individuals are not unknown and account for 2.26 per cent of their total number.

Who was related to whom across the cemetery and in the surrounding regions awaits ancient DNA analysis.[38] It was common, but not the rule, for bones to be comingled, sometimes with no apparent order, but often they were purposefully (but not anatomically) arranged over the floor of the tomb. This may have to do with a protracted mortuary practices. Some time after the deceased was laid to rest, one of the capstone was removed, normally broken in the process. The remnant bones were then rearranged in a variety of patterns, and some were also removed, possibly as relics (Figures 9.4, 9.5). Of the bones left in Tomb 2, for instance, the long bones of the skeleton were clustered mostly at the western end of the tomb. Other bones were arranged in a fashion similar to those in the tile-lined tombs. In the south-west corner of the tomb the small foot and hand bones appear to have been placed rather unceremoniously. Once the post-funerary rituals were completed, Tomb 2 was re-sealed with a number of small stones, most probably the broken remnants of the original capstone.

One of the clearest examples of secondary ritual comes from Tomb 3, also opened during the GAIA expedition. The tomb contained five individuals – an adult female (40–50 years), an adult of indeterminate sex (40–44 years), one sub-adult of indeterminate sex (16–23 years), a juvenile (8–9 years) and one neonate.[39] At the western end of the tomb, three adult long bones were re-arranged in an open-ended square and placed over the pelvis. Other long bones were deliberately positioned east of this arrangement, along the length of the tomb (Figure 9.5(c)–(d)). An alternate interpretation is that the tombs were plundered and the perpetrators left the skeletons in

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[38] Wolfgang Haak currently heads such an ancient DNA project. His other investigations (Haak et al. 2015) have already led to the analysis of genome-wide data for the prehistoric steppes and the northern Caucasus.

[39] Sagona et al. (Pilbrow) 2010a: 41–2.

perplexing configurations possibly for superstitious reasons. That such acts were carried out in antiquity has been suggested for graves as distant as Medieval contexts in Winnall II (southern England, in the mid-seventh to eighth centuries) and Brunn am Gebirge in Austria (sixth century contexts) where skeletal remains were re-arranged.[40] In Merovingian regions of Western Europe amulets and objects that might have been considered to have magical qualities were left in the graves.[41] But the resealing of Tomb 2 does not tally with the work of a tomb robber, so it might represent the activity of family members who closed the disturbed tomb.

The Dead and Their Belongings

Samtavro skeletons reveal striking cultural practices, aside from the post-depositional re-arrangement of bones.[42] Most compelling is purposeful and permanent modification of the cranial vault, imposed by kinsfolk on a significant proportion of both males and females in their infancy, while the skull was still malleable.[43] This would have been achieved using boards, straps or pads. Two types of compression were practised, both achieving a highly visible feature. One produced a cone-head, at times lop-sided, whereas the other flattened the skull. An extreme case of the former type was found in Tomb 303, excavated in 1978 during the Samtavro III campaigns (Figure 9.6(e)). In attempting to explain the social significance of this conspicuous physical feature at Samtavro, we will draw on the notion that the modification, a manifestation of body decoration, like an artefact, speaks strongly of social or ethnic identity. It conveys cultural information about the bearer and maintains social boundaries, especially in multi-ethnic polities or areas that have witnessed marked social changes.

Post-mortem practices were also carried out on bodies at Samtavro. Some skeletons display cut marks that point to the detachment of lower limbs. Certain skeletons had deep gashes behind the knees. Other cut marks are documented along the ankles, reflecting special treatment of the feet. Such was the focus on feet that in one case, Tomb 25, a pair of articulated feet and small segments of shin-bones were the only remains left in the tomb. The meaning of this mortuary rite is also unclear at present, as is the extent of

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[40] Aspöck 2011.

[41] Effros 2002: 59–60.

[42] For the physical anthropology of the Samtavro skeletal material, see Sagona et al. 2010a: 49–51; Sagona et al. 2010b: 321–3.

[43] Modified skulls are being studied by Peter Mayall (PhD candidate) and Varsha Pilbrow, University of Melbourne.
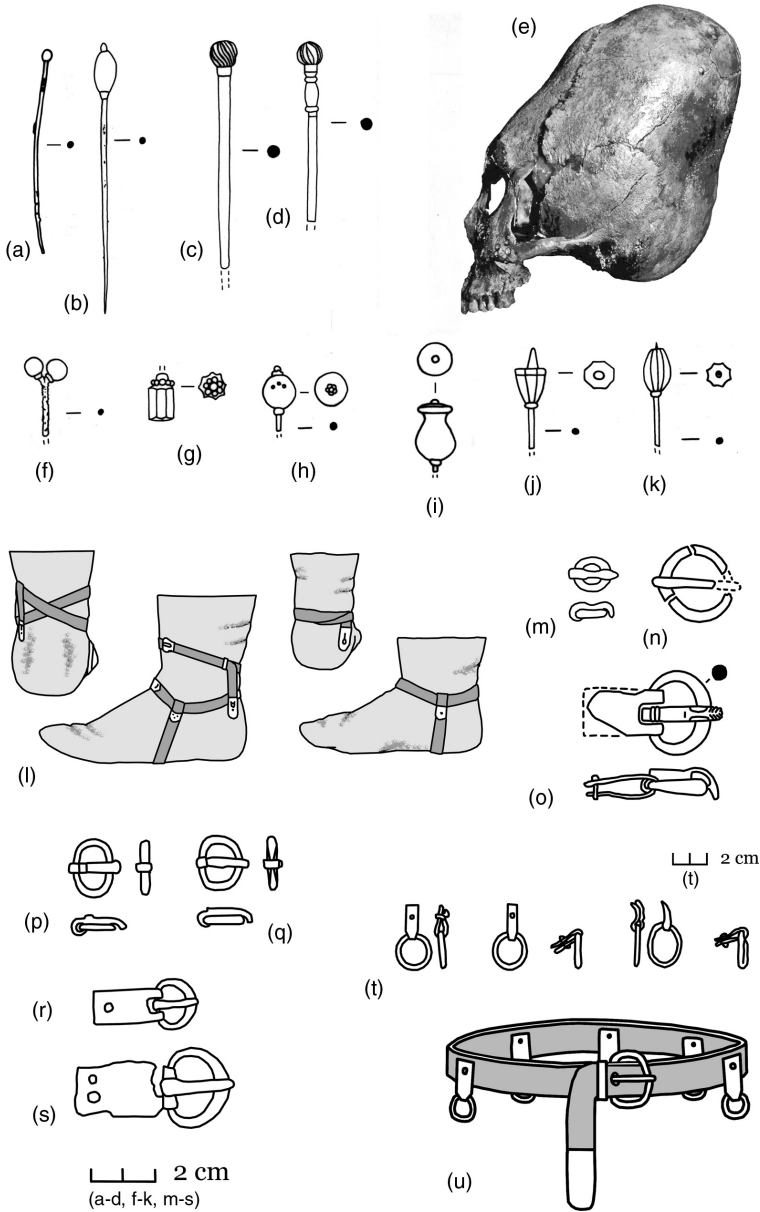
Figure 9.6 (a)–(d), (f)–(k), (p)–(t). Samtavro, selection of pins, pin-heads and buckles from various tombs; (e) Samtavro modified skull, Tomb 303 (Samtavro III; photograph A. Sagona); (l) Reconstruction of shoe straps and fitments based on medieval illustrations (after Komar 2010); (m)–(o) Tsibilium, buckles (after Voronov and Kazanski 2007); (u) Reconstruction of a medieval belt with loop attachments (after Prikhodnyuk et al. 1990)
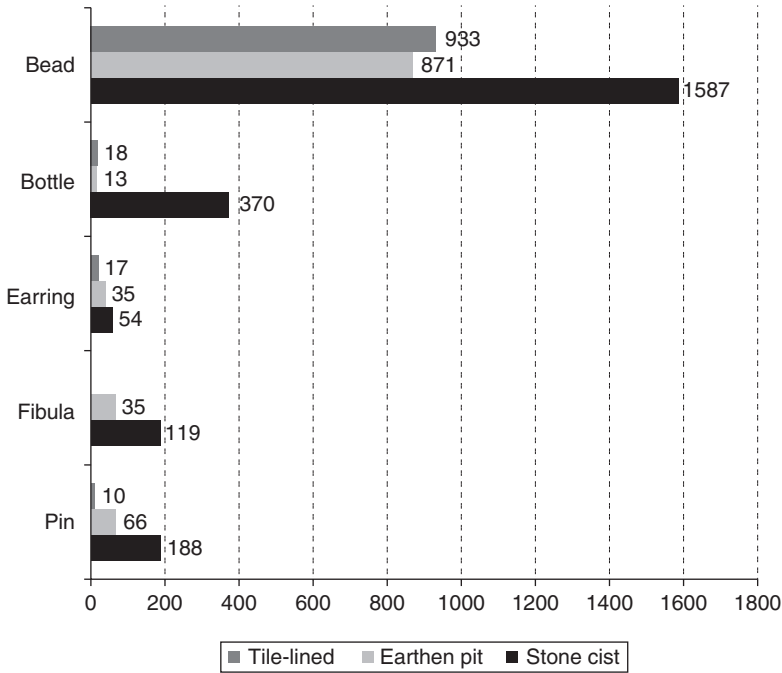
Figure 9.7 Main functional groups of Samtavro artefacts

the practice in surrounding populations. Despite some evidence of trauma, the skeletons recovered by the Samtavro IV expedition speak for a healthy lifestyle.[44]

Turning to grave furnishings, of the 923 (85.86 per cent) excavated tombs for which we have information, only 396 tombs (42.90 per cent) contained any artefacts at all, meaning that 527 (57.10 per cent) were devoid of grave goods. Factors to consider here include the purposeful avoidance of grave goods, secondary burials and/or rituals that resulted with the removal of furnishings (possibly as relics), grave robbing in antiquity and more recent disturbances.

Thirty-six artefact types can be discerned, and the relative quantities of certain types according to the three main tomb types are shown in Figure 9.7. Immediately evident is that individuals were buried with a broad range of artefact types spanning from items of personal use and adornment to tools. Some types are well represented (including beads, pins, finger rings and fibulae, Figure 9.6), but others (ceramic containers (Figure 9.10), a dice, figurines, and styli) are rare. Beads, the most highly represented artefact

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[44] Pilbrow in Sagona et al. 2010a, 2010b.

type, exist in such large quantities because multiple items were used to form single pieces, such as necklaces and bracelets; beads were frequently recovered from around the neck and chest area, as well as around the hands. Certain items, such as glass bottles used for unguents, also well represented, are likely to be ritual objects (Figure 9.11(a)–(j)). Conspicuous is the minimal evidence of weaponry – swords, daggers and spearheads – and horse trappings, which are quite common in the northern Caucasus. We shall return to this point later.

The three most common tombs show some difference in relation to the presence of artefacts: 58.06 per cent of tile-lined tombs, 41.54 per cent of stone cist tombs, and 47.85 per cent of earthen pit burials contain objects. Post-depositional opening of tombs no doubt accounts for the substantial number of tombs without objects, whose stylistic traits do not point to a dramatic shift in cultural traits. Indeed the persistence of long pins with decorative heads and the range of personal items such as fibulae and belt fitments (buckles, suspension loops, finials, Figure 9.6) may reflect shifting styles, but not necessarily fundamental changes in dress or behaviour.

Small glass bottles are of particular interest as they appear predominantly in our three main tomb types (Figure 9.11(a)–(j)). Moreover, though eighteen bottles were recovered from the earlier tile-lined tombs, and thirteen from earthen pits, the majority – 370 bottles – were excavated from stone cist tombs.[45] This clearly indicates that bottles were part of the mortuary ritual, and, as they remained in the re-opened graves – usually positioned around skulls – bottles would seem to have continued to hold some significance for the people involved in the post-funerary disturbance that took place with many of these tombs. Noteworthy are ornamented bronze mirrors that were purposefully broken before burial, a practice that echoes steppe traditions (Figure 9.8(j)).[46] There is also a persistent fashion, not gender specific, to wear long pins with decorative heads in the hair and on the clothing. An indication of how they might have been worn comes from Zhinvali where pins were found in a cluster, interlocked through a bangle-sized ring that might have been worn in the hair perhaps securing a hair bun.[47] Beads are common and testify to a certain sameness regarding the

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[45] Michalewicz 2015, Vol. 1, 238.

[46] Bronze mirrors have been documented at Samtavro in tile-lined and stone cist tombs, as well as in a stone gabled and dressed stone tomb: Tombs 0110, 0485, 0547, 0605, 001 and 035. See Sagona et al. 2010a: 51 for brief discussion. On the practice of breaking mirrors, see Werner 1956: 19–24.

[47] See, for example, Chikhladze 2008: 465 for an artist's impression of pins arranged in this manner, from material recovered at the Zhinvali cemetery.
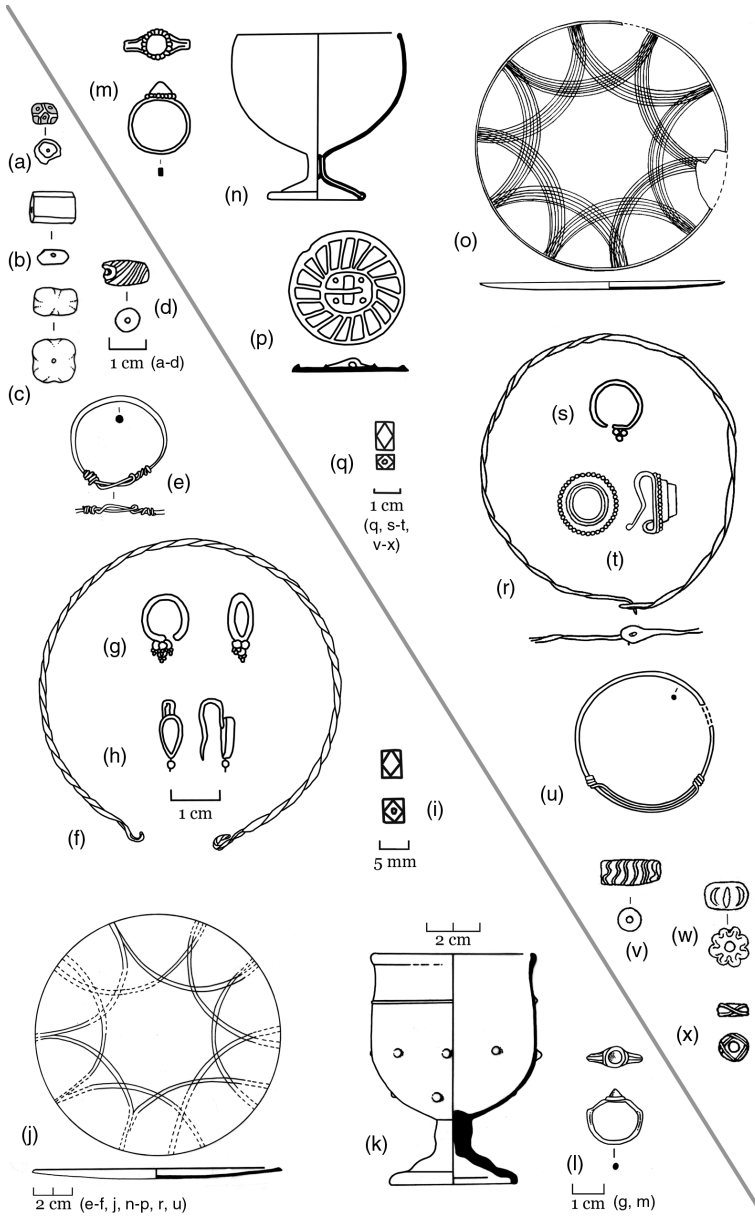
Figure 9.8 A comparison of artefacts from Samtvaro (left) and the northern Caucasus (right; after Voronov and Kazanski 2007)

range of commodities circulating in the Caucasus generally (Figure 9.8(a)–(d)). They also point to long distance trade. Turquoise and lapis lazuli beads were ultimately sourced from workshops in Iran and the mountains of Afghanistan respectively – a trade long established in the ancient Near East.[48] Pearls, shell and coral, garnet and amber among other semi-precious material also point to distant sources. Such finds stand as testament to sustained commercial activity, which passed through Iberia, along the routes that intersected at Mtskheta.

Evidence for objects of personal adornment clusters in a similar pattern. Seventeen earrings were recovered from tile-lined tombs, whilst fifty-four and thirty-five are associated with stone cists and earthen pits respectively. Pendants are represented by one found in a tile-lined tomb, thirteen in stone cist tombs and four in earthen pit burials. Pins came mostly from earthen pits (66) and stone cist tombs (188), with only a small number appearing in tile-lined burials (10). Finger rings have been found in tile-lined (8), stone cist (23), and earthen pit (9) tombs. Knives were recovered from a single tile-lined tomb, as well as one in an earthen pit burial and others in two stone cist tombs. Six tools were identified, one was from a tile-lined tomb, two were from stone cists, and three from earthen pit burials.

Of those artefacts which occur *only* in stone cists and pit [?] tombs, these are: fibulae – 119 from stone cists and thirty-five from earthen pits; seals – four from stone cists and two from earthen pit burials (and a further two found in a single gabled stone tomb); stones – four from stone cists and three from earthen pit burials.

Samtavro Chronology

Until recently the chronology of the Late Roman and Late Antique tombs at Samatvro relied purely on the typological classification of artefacts.[49] This framework has been firmed up through a robust suite of thirty-three radiocarbon dates from the cemetery and the nearby burial site of Tchandiskedi. Samples were collected from skeletal material recovered during the Samtavro IV expedition, and analysed using standard radiocarbon and AMS techniques. The readings, presented in Figure 9.12, have been calculated to a 95.40 per cent probability using the OxCal calibration curve,

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[48] Moorey 1994, for turquoise, 101–3, and lapis lazuli, 85–92, in the Near East. Sarianidi's (1985) catalogue of Bactrian grave accoutrements from Tillya-Tepe (dated from the first century BCE to the first century CE) includes many items, which find parallels in Mtskheta.

[49] Tsitshivili 1948: 519–20; Mandzhgaladze 1990.

Version 4.2.3.[50] Of these dates, twenty-four derive from sixteen Samtavro tombs, providing a good cross-section of the fifty-three tombs excavated during the GAIA campaigns; the other readings from Tchandiskedi are offered here to place the tombs in their historical setting.

Several significant trends are apparent. The most important finding is the watershed period of the late fourth century, when tile-lined tombs petered out and stone cist tombs became the preferred burial custom. The disjuncture is quite dramatic. Radiocarbon readings also show that stone cist tombs (Wk-26159; Wk-28639; ANU-37030, and ANU-37017) were clearly used at a time when tile-lined tombs were the norm, but became the dominant type in the late fourth century. Summing up, we can say that the Late Roman-Late Antique period at Samatvro (and most likely the Mtskheta region generally) witnessed a diversity of burial forms, though the most common was the tile-lined from the first to the late fourth centuries, whereas stone cist tombs became a dominant type between the late fourth to mid-sixth centuries (Figure 9.1).

Over the Mountains: Alanic Burial Grounds in the Northern Caucasus

The scene across the Greater Caucasus Mountains is, in many respects, quite different. Any number of studies reveals a bewildering array of eponyms and an equally diverse range of material culture dated to the first millennium. Earnest attempts to match tombs and their artefacts with historical names of nomads and farmers alike, mentioned in classical and Early Medieval sources, has often led to conflicting and confusing accounts of attribution. The identification of ethnic 'tribes' (and 'sub-tribes') and their territorial boundaries across the greater north Caucasian foreland, extending into the Don-Volga interfluve, is a major concern in many studies.[51] At the centre of this fluid movement of populations and geographic borders are the Alans, readily identifiable in texts, to be sure, even though their material culture is still debated in archaeology. 'The Alan culture of the North Caucasus cannot be interpreted as something stable associated with a certain set of characteristics and a defined territory', wrote M.P. Abramova.[52] Our purpose here is simply to sketch the current majority view on north Caucasian

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[50] Bronk Ramsey 2013; Reimer et al. 2013.

[51] See, for example, Abramova (2005) who does express some caution in associating material culture with ethnic groups; Afanas'ev 1976; Korobov 2012.

[52] Abramova 2005: 122.

developments and to determine the degree of overlap with the archaeo-logical record at Samtavro.

Numerous burial grounds have been documented over many decades of fieldwork in the northern Caucasus where territories are often defined in relation to major river systems.[53] The main tomb type is called a 'catacomb', which in western literature could also be labelled as shaft-and-chamber tomb (Figure 9.13).[54] Essentially these catacombs consist of oblong cham-ber tombs approached by a vertical or oblique shaft or lengthy passageway (a *dromos*), long and wide enough, in some instances, to hold horse burials. Funerary rites were elaborate and involved the interment of the deceased with a range of grave goods left in both the chamber and the shaft. These items could be of a personal or ritual nature, and range from the modest through to high status objects.

Shaft-and-chamber tombs are distributed widely across the north Caucasian foothills (Figure 9.1). Some burial grounds are also quite large, indicating use over many centuries, and here we list only a selection of those investigated. Clusters are found in the Kislovodsk region, about 600 km north-west of Samtavro, where some 102 cemeteries have been identified. According to Dimitri Korobov, '65 are flat cemeteries mainly with catacomb burials (fourth–eighth centuries), nine have under-ground stone-lined chambers ('crypts') or cists of the same date, and 29 are rock-cut tombs or burials in natural caves or rock shelters (seventh–tenth centuries)'.[55] Proximity to defended settlements has largely been a determining factor in assigning a fifth–eighth centuries date for certain necropleis.[56] Around Nalchik, south of Kislovodsk, we have Nizhnii-Dzhulat and Chegem, gen-erally assigned to the second–early third centuries.[57] The Zmeiskaia necrop-olis of catacombs in Kirovski, North Ossetia, was excavated in the 1950s, and again between 1981 and 2005. Here over 400 burial sites have been documented, of which 269 are catacombs dated to the tenth–thirteenth centuries, showing the longevity of this tomb type.[58] Locations around the Kambileevka and Terek Rivers are considered to share analagous cultural traditions. In this location, the extensive Beslan burial grounds at Zilgi (the site of a large Alanic town excavated in 1985–1990),[59] spanning over seven square kilometres, held catacomb burials of similar type with steps in the

[53] Abramova 2005: 122–7, fig. 1; Kazanski and Mastykova 2010: fig. 1.

[54] Barca (2012: 145) cautions on the use of catacomb tomb type as an indicator of Alan ethnicity.

[55] Korobov 2012: 46, fig. 4; Afanas'ev 1976: 125.

[56] Korobov 2012: 47; Gabuev 1986.

[57] Abramova 2005: 127–8; Abramova 1972 (Nizhnii-Dzhulat); Kerefov 1985 (Chegem).

[58] Vinogradov and Markovin 1966.

[59] Arzhantseva, Deopik and Malashev 2000.

entrance pit to gain entry to oval or rectangular chambers located on the northern wall of the pit. Although plundered, the graves were dated from the second–fourth centuries. Further north, in the Don Basin ten locations are identified with Alanic catacomb style burials.[60] At Tanais, on the mouth of the Don River, graves do not appear to follow a strict architectural design and vary in their shaft-and-chamber layout. Occasional references to wooden planks suggest some form of coffin or bier was used in certain tombs.[61] Pit and jar burials, the latter containing infants, are also documented there.

Burial mounds (also termed barrow burials or kurgans) are another type of tomb. They are a common landscape feature in the territory bordering the western Caspian Sea around the lower Sulak River (Dagestan), which is an area almost devoid of settlements. These Dagestani mounds are assigned to the third–fourth centuries and cover a pit, niche or catacomb graves.[62] In certain instances, it appears that communities re-used earlier (prehistoric) mounds. They dug through the earthen mound and re-sealed it once the deceased was buried. South of Derbent at Palasa-Syrt, also in Dagestan, mounds generally held one burial placed within a long chamber set at right angles to the entrance passage (T-shaped catacombs). At the other end of the Caucasus, eleven burial mound complexes have been investigated at Lvovskii Pervi (fourth–fifth centuries) in the Krasnador region to the north-west.[63] Unlike those mounds around the Caspian, these barrows generally had multiple burials.

Some of the most informative data are derived from extensive necropoleis at Klin-Yar, near Kislovodsk, on the Stavropol Plateau.[64] An estimated one to three thousand graves are located across this hilly region. The majority of the 350 tombs excavated prior to 1993 date to the Iron Age half of the Koban Culture (tenth–fourth centuries BCE), but a hundred or so belong to the Late Iron Age (Sarmatian), Roman and the Early Mediaeval period (Alanic).[65] Anthropological studies (bone chemistry, not DNA) carried out on skeletal material coupled with changing patterns of material culture have enabled the shifting human presence in the region, and changes in land use and economy to be tracked through the three cultural phases.

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[60] Afanas'ev et al. 2014.
[61] For wooden planks in tombs, see Arsen'eva 1977, Tombs 138, 140, 214, 241.
[62] Abramova 2005: 125.
[63] Gmyria 1993.
[64] Härke and Belinskij 2014.
[65] Härke and Belinskij 2012: 133.

The earliest group, villagers and farmers of the Iron Age, were indigenous to the area. Towards the middle of the first millennium BCE, Sarmatians warriors (only men are represented in the skeletal remains) infiltrated the area around Klin-Yar and intermarried with Koban women. A lack of Sarmatian settlements suggests a mobile subsistence economy based on stockbreeding. Then, the Alans arrived in the second incursion, this time a migration of men and women. Their settlements point to a more settled life style based on a mixed economy. Despite this flow of peoples and blending of traditions, Härke and Belinskij note that 'one of the most remarkable aspects of the Klin-Yar elite plot is the continuity from the Late Sarmatian to the Early Alanic period. This is remarkable because the anthropological data suggest an immigration at the beginning of the Alanic period. The continuity of the elite plot implies a stability of social patterns through this immigration phase.'[66]

The Northern Tombs and their Contents

The intact elite burials at Klin-Yar most likely reflect familial connections in multiple use complexes. Continuity in funerary architecture from the Sarmatian to Alanic phase is characterized by an increased complexity: entranceways of catacombs are oriented north–south, chambers are bigger and deeper with additional pits and niches. This is matched, in the Alanic phase, by a more elaborate funerary ritual when the *dromos*, now often filled with horses or their skins and pottery, was often used for depositions.[67] Males were placed near the entrances of chambers and females were positioned near the back wall in larger graves.

The overriding physical marker for a social or ethnic distinction is the practice of skull modification. This custom has some chronological depth in the northern Caucasus and is considered to point to Sarmatian and later Alanic and Hunnic practices among the elite of society.[68] Examples of modified skulls have been found, for instance, at Tsibilium (Sibelium or Apsiles).[69] In Europe, the custom of skull modification is geographically widespread and covers many centuries. Two groups divided by the Alps can be discerned. An eastern cluster, incorporating the Carpathian

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[66] Härke and Belinskij 2012: 137.

[67] Härke and Belinskij 2012: 135–7.

[68] Härke and Belinskij 2012: 136.

[69] Tsibilium tombs with cranially modified skeletons, Voronov and Kazanski 2007, Vol. I: 27–8, 69, 78, 87, 90, Tomb 85, fig. 41; Tomb 296, fig. 139: 15–31; Tomb 344, fig. 161: 3–6; Tomb 389–90, fig. 185; Tomb 403, fig. 193: 21–7.

basin and Black Sea region, is considered the heartland, where the earliest modified skulls are associated with the Sarmatian period of the second and third centuries CE, effectively pre-dating the Hunnic invasions. The second group represents the westward infiltration into Europe and is represented by immigrant populations, especially evident in female skeletal remains.[70] While skull modification is often associated with certain artefact types such as mirrors, the wider archaeological context of this distinctive practice is quite heterogeneous. This suggests that the social processes at play are complex and might have included various patterns of population transfers such as social mobility of women through marriage (exogamy), troop movements associated with Hunnic or other forces in the region, forced relocation and possible slavery, or a passive cultural transference.[71] Similar issues should be considered in the Caucasus.

Burials in the northern Caucasus were furnished with objects that are gender specific and reflect the social standing of the deceased. Horse burials, long considered to reflect the equestrian interests of Alanic culture, as well as associated riding paraphernalia were found in a number of tombs.[72] Horses, their skins and/or body parts, as well as the trappings of riding – saddles, harnesses, bits, stirrups – were often placed in burial complexes and reflected the power and prestige of their individuals who were leaders, warriors, and wealthy, and whose families presumably still wielded social and political clout in the community (Figure 9.13(b)).

Gender is also expressed in personal and decorative items once worn as part of clothing.[73] Intact graves have been found at many sites, but those within the cemeteries at Tsibilium are particularly insightful. People were dressed for the grave. Belts around the waist were standard and had pendant chatelaines with useful implements and amulets (Figure 9.6). Shoes and boots were strapped on securely (Figure 9.6).[74] Fibulae were used to fastened garments and often a pair would be worn at shoulder level (Figure 9.9(c)–(f)). In Europe these could be quite elaborate and developed into distinctive regional types, but in the Caucasus, north and south, less so. Jewellery for the elite revealed the taste for gold embellished with garnets sourced in India and Sri Lanka – cut, polished and set into mounts

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[70] On cranial modification, for example: Hakenbeck 2009, 2011 (Europe); Khudaverdyan 2011 (Armenia); Pany and Wiltschke-Schrotta 2008 (Austria); Pap 1985 (Hungary); Sagona et al. 2010a (Samtavro, Georgia); Schwessing and Grupe 2000.

[71] Effros 2004: 168.

[72] Härke and Belinskij 2012: 136.

[73] On women's graves, Mastykova 2002.

[74] Komar 2010: 94–115.
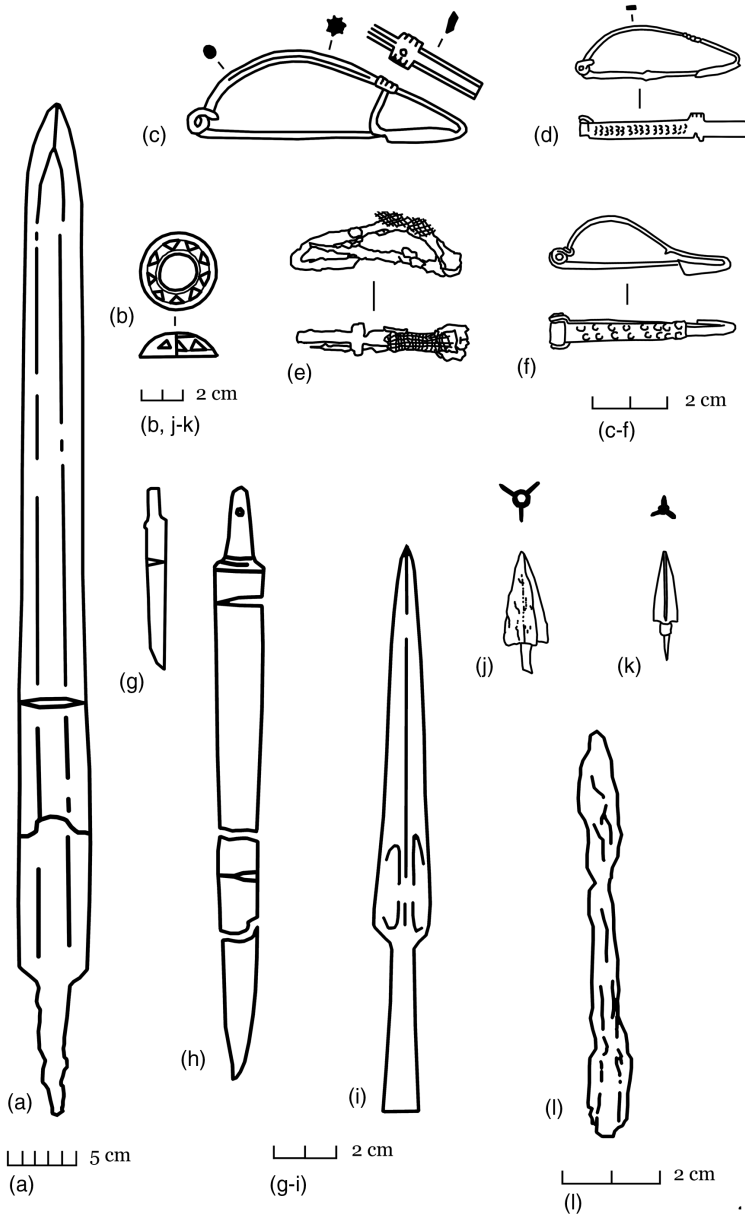
Figure 9.9 (a), (c), (d), (g)–(i) Tsibilium artefacts (after Kazanski and Mastykova 2010, Voronov and Kazanski 2007); (b), (e), (f), (j), (l) Samtavro artefacts

in bezel settings, resembling cloisonné enamel work – such items were so widespread that they can be found as far west as Sutton Hoo in England.[75] To judge from ethnographic studies, certain items such as beads might have had the dual purpose of jewellery and talisman – to protect the wearer from harm or to restore health. Banded glass beads, for instance, are often linked with averting evil, whereas carnelian and pearl shell are connected to healing and to strengthen eyesight.[76]

Weaponry (Figure 9.9) associated with male skeletons can be found in northern graves, and Kaminsky has made a study of a range suited to both hand-to-hand combat (swords, battle-axes, flails) and long-range weapons (javelins, spears and bow).[77] Swords have a long history in the north Caucasus, but examples with six sides (flattened broad faces and oblique edges on both sides to the cutting edge) are thought to have arrived with Alanic groups from Europe in the second half of the fifth century after the death of Attila in 453.[78] The range of weapons and gear, an assembly common to cavalry and foot troops, developed over time to include innovations such as broad swords. But some armoury such as chainmail was adopted from Roman technology.

Metal cauldrons were a feature of food preparation in Hunnic cultures, but larger examples, especially, may also have served in ritual contexts for groups of people gathered together.[79] They appear in Eastern Europe (e.g. Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Romania). These robust, somewhat rustic vessels were cast predominantly from copper in two parts – body and foot or legs – and soldered together in a serviceable, if not aesthetic fashion. They do not appear to have been produced in one workshop, but rather manufactured in regional centres close to ore deposits.[80] Broken mirrors and fragments of mirrors have been found widely in Hunnic burials, including the northern Caucasus, and are considered a hallmark of the tradition.[81] Ceramic vessels are present in small numbers in the northern Caucasus and are mostly smaller table wares: pouring jugs, drinking vessels such as tall pots and handled mugs or pots (Figures 9.10; 9.14; 9.15); heavily ribbed or knobbed tankards are usually taken as the hallmark Alanic forms. Glass vessels, also part of fine tableware, included stemmed goblets, tall beakers

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[75] Garnet jewellery: Oanta-Marghitu et al. 2009; Horváth and Bendő 2011; Calligaro et al. 2002.
[76] Afanas'ev 1976: 129–30; Apakidze and Nikolaishvili 1994: 52.
[77] Kaminsky 1996: 95; Härke and Belinskij (2012: 134) for tools and weapons in male burials at Klin-Yar.
[78] Kaminsky 1996: 96.
[79] Maenchen-Helfen 1973: 15, 306–37.
[80] Maenchen-Helfen 1973: 319–23.
[81] Maenchen-Helfen 1973: 337–54.
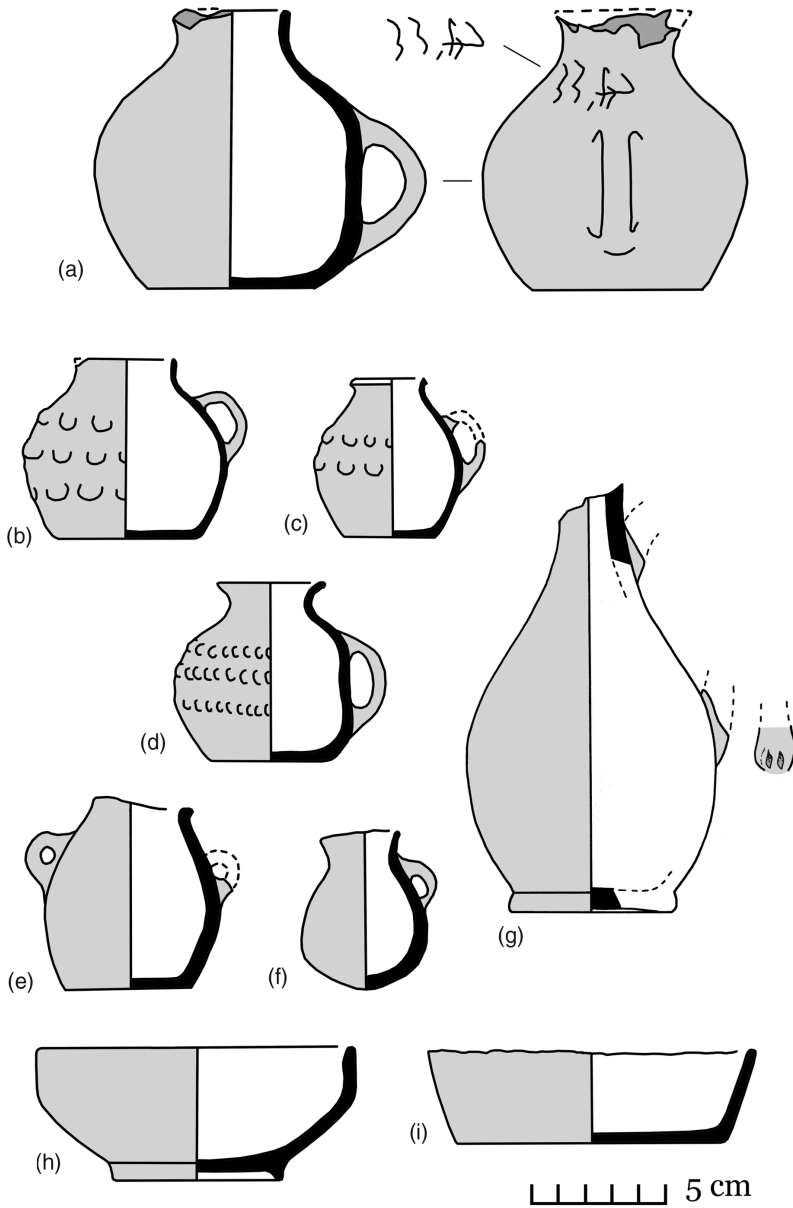
Figure 9.10 Samtavro pottery: (a) Tomb 564; (b)–(c) Tomb 242; (d) Tomb 517; (e) Tomb 329; (f) Tomb 134; (g) Samatvro IV, Area 143, topsoil; (h) Tomb 564; (i) Tomb 251 (Samtavro III archive)

and bowls (Figure 9.8(n)). Small bottles and unguentaria have been found in some tombs in the northern regions (Figure 9.11(k)–(l)).

In general, certain attributes of the graves or their contents have been drawn on to define the nature of non-Christian religious beliefs among the Alanic peoples. In regards to their pantheon of deities, it is the amulets in particular that underpin the attribution of burials to the Alans.[82] Not only the grave contents, but also the folklore, linguistic and ethnographic traditions of the Ossetians (who are seen as their descendants) are gathered into such discussions.[83] Totemic items and charms are common and their iconography animalistic – fox, hare, snake, horse, ram, sheep and birds among other creatures. Amulets of the hare were associated with female burials and placed around the hip.[84] Others depicting circles, spirals, rayed designs, and mirrors, for instance, have been linked to the Alanic belief in a solar deity. Coins can be placed in tombs, but these can be older than the general contents of the graves, suggesting that they are likely to have come from hoards accumulated by families over time.

Post-Depositional Disturbance of Grave Deposits

Many studies are concerned with the social processes of funerary ritual, emphasizing notions like power and prestige. But we should not forget that other ritual features must also be considered; magic and witchcraft, as part of or complementary to religion, must have played a role in the beliefs about death and the afterlife. The ancient literate world is replete with myths about souls and spirits, ghosts and death, yet for societies with no texts we are necessarily guided by material culture. Looking across the Caucasus and Europe there are unusual practices that Härke has called 'signs of a belief in the power of the dead'.[85] Although the intentional re-organization of bones is not common north of the Caucasus, we have good examples from Cherneliv Ruska in the Ukraine, where bones were exhumed and reburied in different arrangements.[86]

In other parts of Europe influenced by Hunnic practices bodies were sometimes weighed down by stones, decapitated or had clear signs that their hands and feet were tied. Such treatment suggests that an underlying fear of certain people followed them into the grave, and that those who

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[82]   Abaeva 1960; Albegova 2001.
[83]   Albegova 2001: 83.
[84]   Afanas'ev 1976: 125–6.
[85]   Härke 2001: 23.
[86]   Tylishchak 2014.
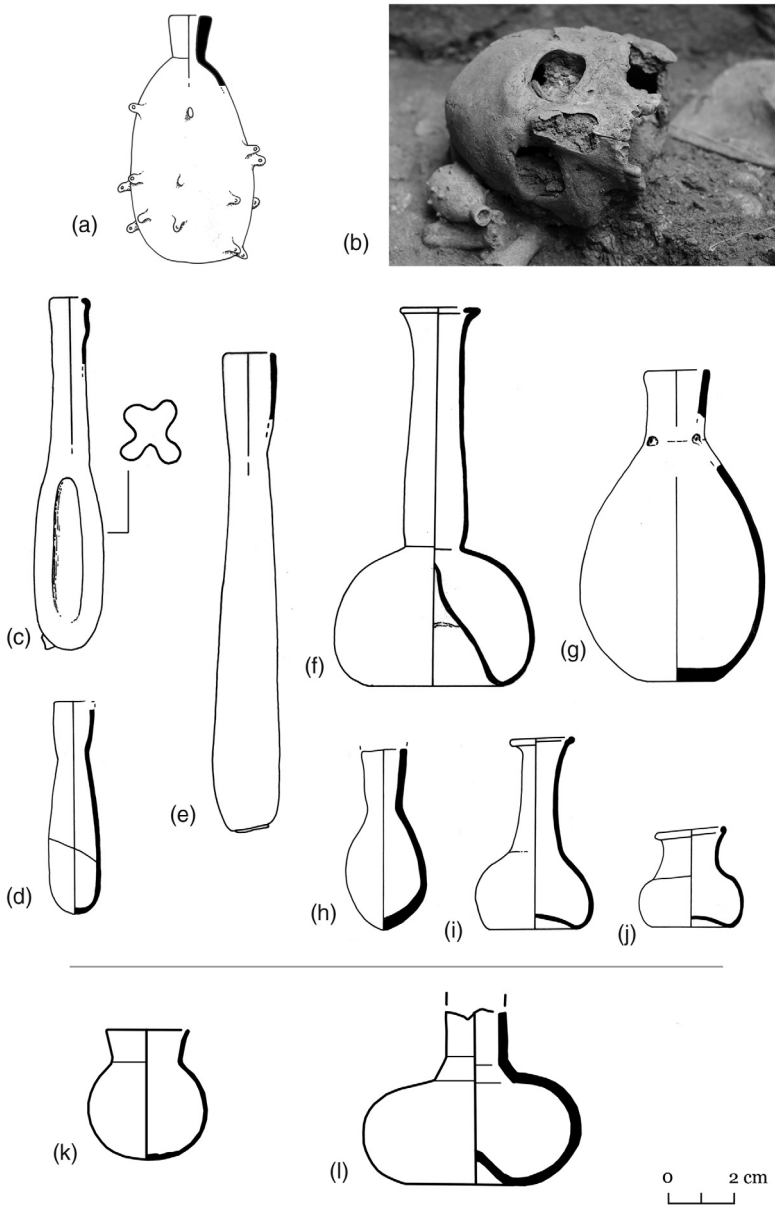
Figure 9.11 (a)–(j) Samtavro, glass bottles (after Sagona et al. 2010a): (k)–(l) Tsibilium, glass bottles (after Voronov and Kazanski 2007)

OxCal V4.2.3 Bronk Ramsey (2013), r.5 IntCal 13 atmospheric curve (Reimer et al. 2013).
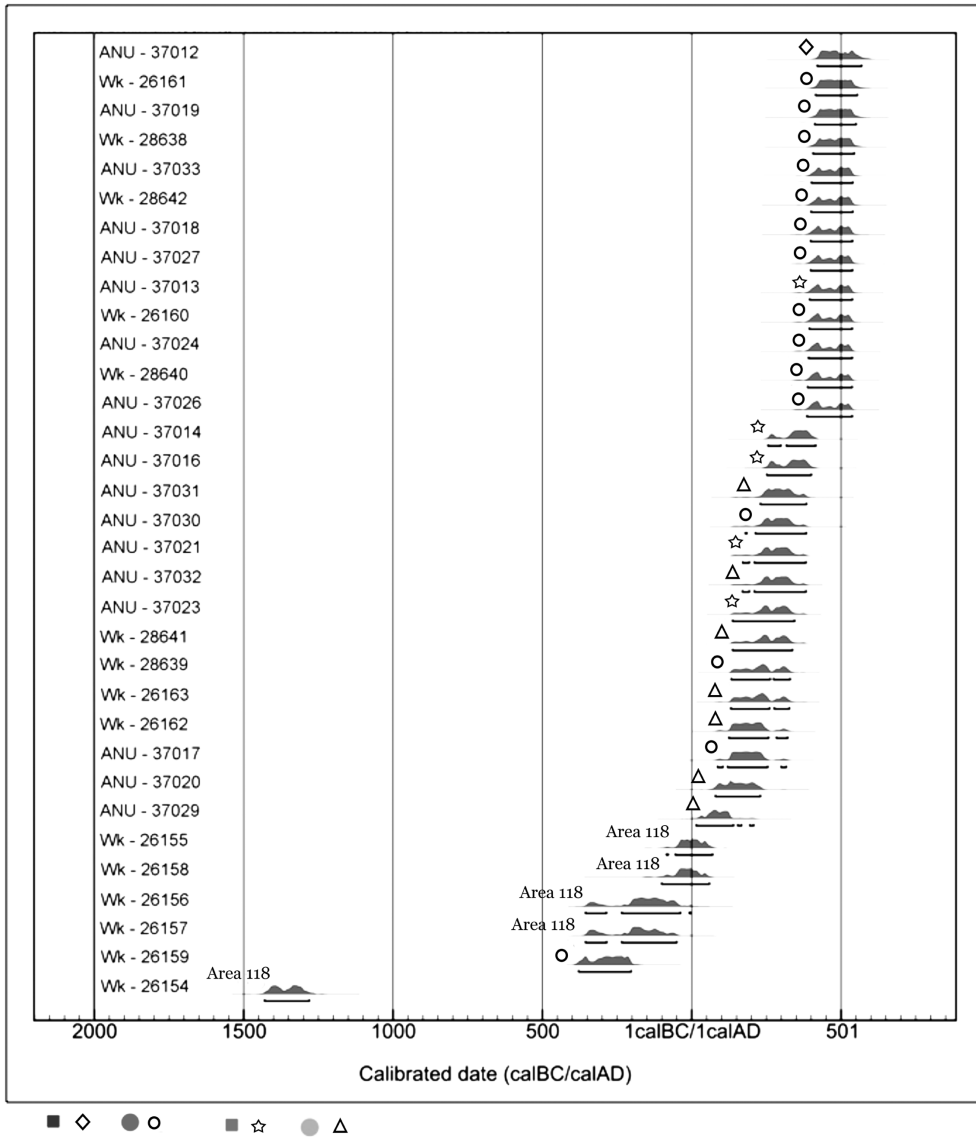
Figure 9.12 Radiocarbon readings from Samtavro and Tchkantisdeki. Circle – stone cist tombs, Samtavro; triangle – tile-lined tombs, Samtavro; square – earthen pit, Tchkantiskedi; star – clay sarcophagus, Tchkantiskedi
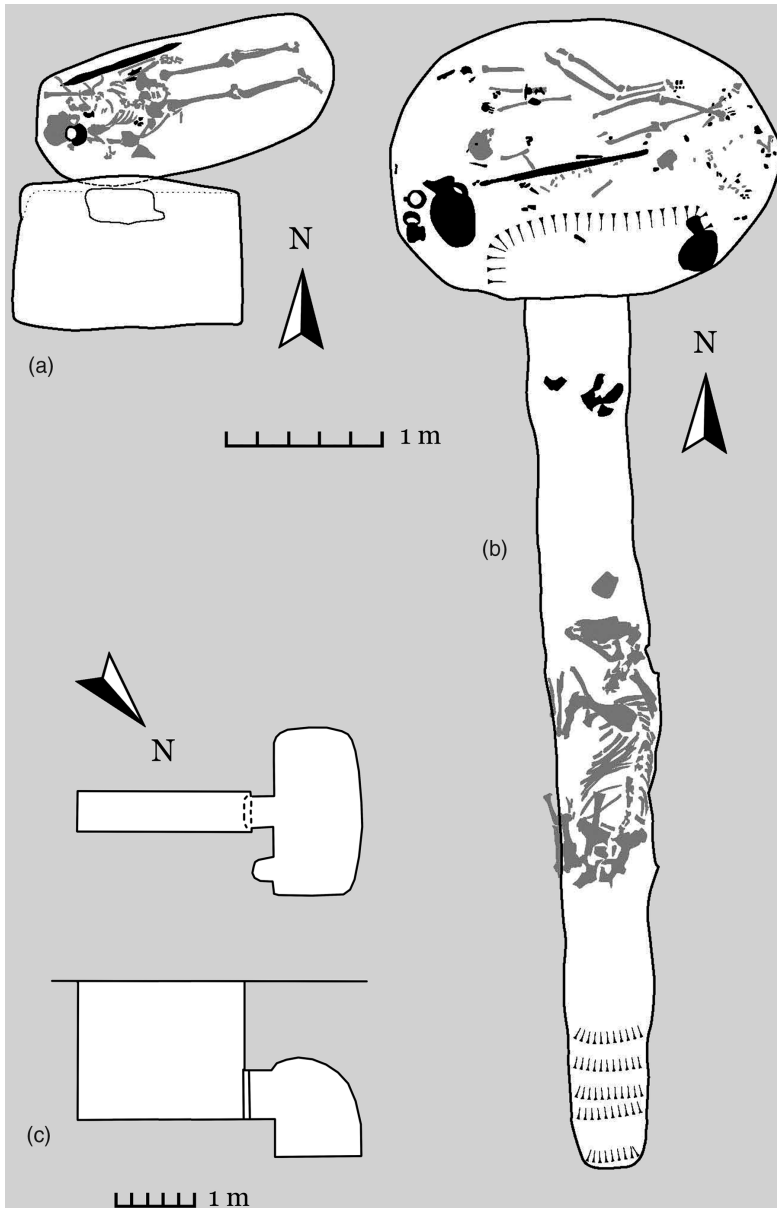
Figure 9.13 North Caucasian tomb types (a) Klin-Yar, Tomb 365, a Sarmatian shaft and chamber; (b) Klin-Yar, Tomb 360, an Alanic tomb with oblong shaft and long entrance passage or *dromos*, with horse burial mid-way; (c) Baital-Chapkan, Tomb 14 ((a)–(b) after Härke and Belinskij 2012, (c) after Kuznecov 1962)
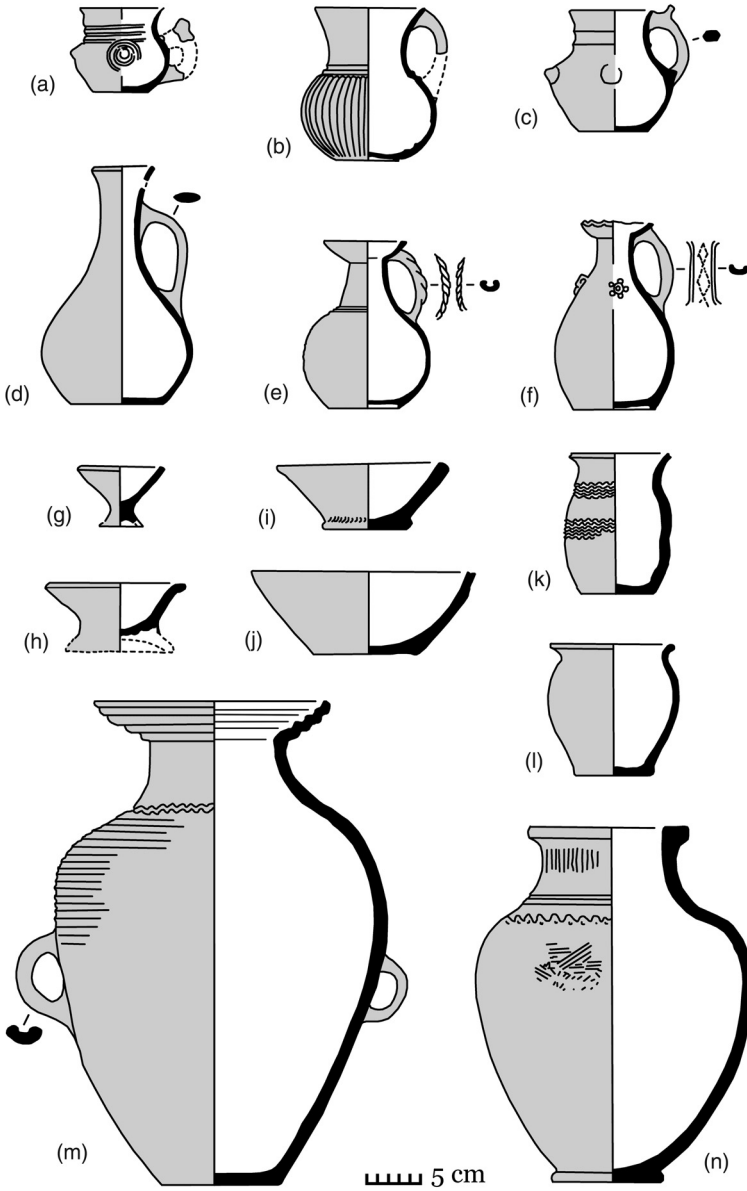
Figure 9.14 Tsibilium, Alanic pottery from various tombs (after Voronov and Kazanski 2007)
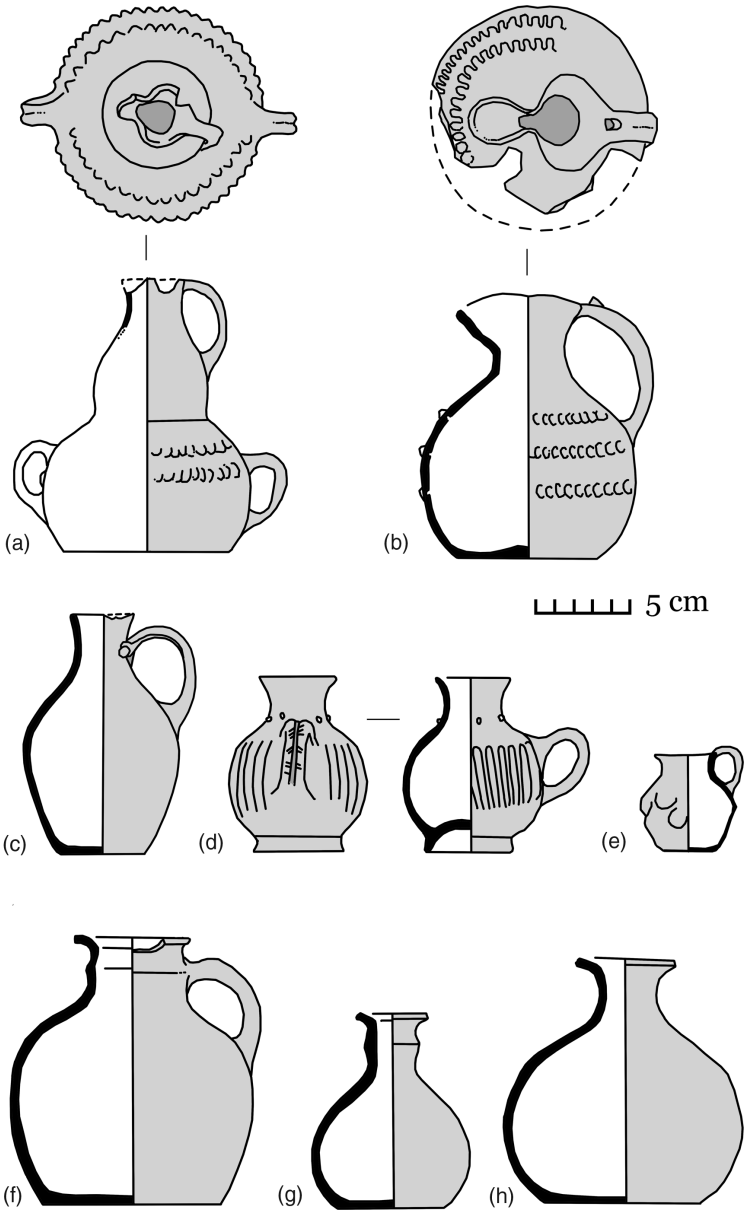
Figure 9.15 Tsibilium, Alanic pottery from various tombs (after Voronov and Kazanski 2007)

survived them took measures accordingly.[87] Underlying reasons for carrying out such practices range from acts to sabotage the deceased's path to resurrection, as punishment inflicted on the guilty for criminal acts carried out during their life, or to stymie any chance of the dead rising from their graves.[88] At Klin-Yar odd practices are also documented:

As well as showing splendid wealth, catacomb 363 supplied some of the most intriguing evidence for secondary deposition. On the floor of the chamber, long bones of two adult individuals were found, but only one skull which seems to have been split and the two halves carefully laid out in such a way as to suggest the presence of two skulls.[89]

Remnants of larger objects such as segments of chains probably from chatelaines, decorative elements such as bells and parts of glass bottles and mirrors suggest that objects may have been removed from the tombs when they were re-opened. Broken or anomalous objects in a grave, however, represent purposeful placements, which were made to block a perceived threat that the deceased might inflict from the grave. According to traditional folklore and superstitions, broken mirrors in burials assigned to the Alanic-Hunnic cultures could have served the purpose of ensuring the dead remained in the tomb.[90]

Concluding Remarks

In the previous two sections of this chapter, the character of the later burials at Samtavro and the contemporary inhumations in the northern Caucasus was presented. While it is impossible within the scope of such a brief study to draw any firm conclusions regarding the relationship between the two regions, we have tried to show that a comparison of cemeteries offers scope for interpreting the distinct changes that appeared at Samtavro. A systematic comparison of cemeteries from both regions could better tease out the mix of elements represented in mortuary ritual. Certainly, there is a need to break away from the self-referential studies so common in the south Caucasus and place its material culture in the context of the wider traditions of the Migration Period.

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[87] Härke 2001: 23 drawing on Harman, Molleson and Price 1981: 145–88 where beheading in Britain has been discussed.
[88]   Daniell 1997: 165.
[89] Härke and Belinskij 2000.
[90] Härke 2014.

How, then, can we explain the evidence at Samtavro? Are we dealing with a migration of people from the northern steppe, or a series of cultural influences that permeated over the mountain during a period of great cultural flux? Or was it perhaps a more complex picture involving a certain degree of continuity in the cultural crucible that was Mtskheta, combined perhaps with an array of muffled new traits? To answer these questions with any degree of objectivity, without recourse to simplistic diffusionist models or defaulting to historical events, we need to bear in mind two things. First, the Caucasus throughout much of its history has been a frontier zone, where the interplay of different societies fostered regional identities. Second, there are difficulties in equating a 'living culture' or an 'ethnicity' with an archaeological assemblage, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The comparisons that follow, coarse-grained though they are, raise complex questions on the nature of population movements, and the exchange of goods and ideas, and how each of these factors shaped identity on both sides of the Caucasus.

Human Remains: The most striking link between the two regions is cranial modification. This distinct physical trait, literally shaped by a community, is a permanent marker of social and personal identity. Unlike jewellery or costume, cranial modification is not a fad. The adoption of this custom on a wide scale can be traced back to the first century in central Asia, whence it arrived in central Europe with the Hunnic invasions. Yet as Hakenbeck has noted, cranial modification east of the Alps seems to predate the Huns and is likely to have been practised by Sarmatians in the second and third centuries in Pannonia, a border zone of the late Roman Empire. Like Pannonia, the Caucasus developed its own frontier culture. The modified skulls from the cemetery at Samatvro reflect increasing Alanic–Georgian relations. Whereas women are invariably represented in the western group of modified skulls in Europe, the Samtavro examples are not gender specific.[91] This suggests that in the southern Caucasus we do not have patterns of exogamy, but rather small-scale dispersal of families who maintained this custom.

Tomb Architecture: Unlike skull modification, burial traditions in the northern and southern Caucasus are distinctly different apart from the ubiquitous earthen pits. On the one hand we have mostly tile-lined tombs and stone cists, as well as earthen pit burials, whereas in the northern regions the preferred mode of grave was the shaft-and chamber catacomb, which persisted for centuries. In Dagestan, a mound of earth (a kurgan) covered the grave and flagged its position on the landscape. A diversity of tomb

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[91]   Sagona et al. (Pilbrow) 2010a: 51.

types with a cultural complex or even burial ground is not unusual and has a long tradition. In the Iron Age, for instance, both the northern and southern Caucasus, dominated by the Koban and Colchian cultures respectively, show a multiplicity of burial traditions.[92] This array reflects the shifting and changing circumstances of the day, governed by socio-political factors, rather than any major ethnic upheavals within the community.

Intentional Post-Funerary Disturbance: There is strong evidence that at Samtavro, graves were opened, the skeletal remains tampered with and in all likelihood some of the contents – both skeletal and grave goods – were removed. The re-arrangement of bones into patterns and removal of some skeletal material was beyond what one could expect for straightforward plunder of funerary objects. As we have seen, a similar practice is attested in the Ukraine, where the excavators, drawing on ethnographic studies, suggest the custom represents the final burial of the dead and their transition to another world.

Grave Goods: Cauldrons, a hallmark of Hunnic metalwork, are not represented at Samtavro. Likewise weapons and horse riding paraphernalia, commonplace in northern cemeteries, are quite rare at Samtavro. By contradistinction, pins and glass bottles are major artefact types at Samatvro, but are not a highlight further north. The practice of breaking bronze mirrors, on the other hand, is a custom found on both sides of the Caucasus, and point to an enduring Hunnic tradition. There are several items such a buckles and fibulae, however, which point to a transmission of metal objects across the Caucasus, enough to suggest the existence of a broad metallurgical tradition in the Late Antique period. Regrettably, we have next to no detailed information on the operational sequence associated with metalwork – the extraction of ores, and creation, use and deposition of objects, which at present precludes a proper understanding of the social-cultural networks that lead to these regional variations.

There are enough similarities between Samtavro and the northern Caucasus, then, to suggest the trickling of Alanic traditions south of the mountains. Moreover, we believe this would have involved people and not just the transmission of fashion and ideas. The rather abrupt appearance of stone cist tombs at Samtavro coeval with the Alanic period of the steppes is noteworthy. Their construction required the marshalling of human resources, and the grave goods reflect a general level of affluence among the community, who enjoyed a healthy lifestyle. This mix and blend of features point to integration and assimilation of populations in cosmopolitan

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[92] Gobejishvili 2014.

Mtskheta, each maintaining, at times tenaciously, customs from their homeland, but at the same time readily absorbing new traditions.[93]

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[93] Hakenbeck (2009: 71) discusses similar signs of integration of Hunnic groups who settled in the Central Europe and adopted local burial tradition.

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10 | Greeks, Scythians, Parthians and Kushans in Central Asia and India

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Introductory Remarks

This chapter re-examines the history of the Scythians, Parthians and Kushans, Inner Asian invaders who ruled over Central Asia and India (after displacing the Indo-Greek and Greco-Bactrian successors of Alexander the Great) from the Second century BCE until the decadence of the Kushan Empire circa Fourth century CE (see Figure 10.1). It also reanalyses the interactions between these Inner Asian new-comers and the earlier Indo-Greeks/Greco-Bactrians via the reassessment of existing archaeological evidence and the introduction of more recent evidence that sheds new light on these intriguing interactions. The chapter furthermore highlights the impact of Hellenism in Central Asia and India and how this influenced the succeeding Inner Asian regimes that displaced the Greek hegemony.

The reconstruction of the history of the Greeks in Bactria and India and their nomadic successors (Scythians, Parthians and Kushans) depends mainly on coins and inscriptions. The ancient texts dealing with the early history of these kingdoms are rare: we are left with short passages from a few Greek and Latin authors, and some Indian and Chinese texts. Greek and Latin historians were not interested in the destiny of the Greeks in Bactria and India, and the names of local authorities are mentioned only when they have direct or indirect connection with the Seleucids or the Parthians.[1] On the other hand, Chinese annals give us some important information about the Kushans.

  As for the expansion of the Scythians and Yuezhi in Sogdiana, we rely mostly on their material culture, since Scythians did not start minting coins before they settled in the north-west frontier. Their kurgans (burial mounds) punctuate the long march towards India. Discoveries of their artefacts made in Altai at Pasirik, Orlat and Khalchayan in Sogdiana, Tiliya Tepe in Bactria and, more recently, in Jelalabad in Afghanistan are of great

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[1] For an overview of these available data, see Bopearachchi 1991: 41–141; Bopearachchi and
    Pieper 1998: 177–223; the catalogue by Bopearachchi, Landes and Sachs 2003: 81–98, 129–132.

	Sogdiana	Bactria	Paropamisadae	Gandhāra	West Panjab	East Panjab
250 BC	-----------	Diodotos I & II				
230 BC	-----------	Euthydemos I				
190 BC	Demetrios I --					
	Euthydemos II ------------		----------------------	Agathocles & Pantaleon --------------		
175 BC	Antimachos I --------------		----------------------	Apollodotos I ----------------------------		
	Demetrios II		---------------------- Antimachos II ---			
171 BC	Eucratides I --					
		Menander I---				
145 BC	*Yue-Zhi*	Eucratides II – Plato				
	Heliocles I					
130 BC	----------------*Yue-Zhi* -------		Zoilos I		Diomedes -------Agathocleia & Strato I ---------	
120 BC		Lysias – Antialcidas				
100 BC		Philoxenos --------------------		Polyxenos Epander		
	Demetrios III	Theophilos	Thrason	Nicias Peucolaos		
90 BC		Hermaios	Heliocles II	Amyntas Menander II ----------		
			Archebios ------------------			
	----------------------*Yue-Zhi* ------------------ -----------				Maues (Indo-Scythian) -------------	
85 BC		Indo-Scythians		Artemidoros	Telephos	
70 BC				Apollodotos II -------------------------------------		
		Hippostratos ----------------		Dionysios		
47 BC	-------------------- Azes (Indo-Scythian) -----------------				Zoilos II	
35 BC					Apollophanes	
25 BC					Strato II & III	
AD 20	-------------------- *Indo-Parthians* -------------------------				Rujuvula (Indo-Scythian)	
AD 40	-------------------- Kujula Kadphise --------------------					
AD 90	---------------------- Soter Megas --				Vima Taktu	
AD 100	---------------------- Vima Kadphises --					
AD 127	---Kanishka I --					
AD 150	--- Huvishka --					

Figure 10.1 Chronology of Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians and Early Kushans

importance in understanding the customs and warfare of the Scythians and Yuezhi.[2]

The discovery of an unprecedented number of inscriptions in Greek, Bactrian and Gandhari enables us to tackle fundamental questions regarding the history of the Kushans and the relative chronology of the Greeks, Scythians, Parthians and Kushans who reigned in Gandhāra and in neighbouring regions.

Richard Salomon published an inscription bearing a triple date, referring to the eighth day of Shravana in the regnal year 27 of Vijayamitra, the year 73 of the 'Azes' year, and the year 201 of the Greeks (*yonana*).[3] According to Salomon, since the Azes era is apparently the same as the modern Vikrama era, the date of the inscription would correspond to approximately 15 CE, and to the 'year of the Greeks' 186/5. Harry Falk and Chris Bennett reexamined the inscription on the so-called Trasaka reliquary already published by Gérard Fussman and disputed the hypothesis that the Vikrama era is equivalent to the Azes era.[4] Falk reads the year number 172 where before only the month called 'intercalary Gorpiaios' was seen. Comparing all Near Eastern intercalary systems, it became clear that the date should refer to the Arsacid intercalary system. In none of the systems, including the Arsacid, would a running year 172 based on the *yavana* starting in 185 BCE produce an intercalary Gorpiaios. With a shift to 47 BCE, this synchronism was possible. If the Azes era is to be dated in the year 48/7, the year 201 of the Greeks (*yonana*) mentioned in the Bajaur inscription published by Salomon must be placed in the year 176/5, giving us some precious indication on how to place in a chronological order some of the Greek, Parthian, Scythian and Kushan kings who reigned in India, and allowing us to establish the ascension of Kanishka I to the throne and the beginning of Gandhāran art to about 127 CE.[5]

Towards the middle of the second century BCE, first Sogdiana and then Bactria were progressively overrun by invasions of nomadic tribes. The Yuezhi, who later took the dynastic name Kushan, played a decisive role in this invasion. After the reign of Heliocles I, probably the last Greek king of Bactria, the Greeks were completely overpowered by the Yuezhi around 130 BCE, and lost any remaining control over the provinces north of the Hindu Kush.[6] Greek kings who were already ruling in the regions south of

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[2] For some observations about these discoveries in relation to the Scythians, see Bopearachchi 2003b. For an excellent article on the latest discoveries, see Francfort 2013.
[3] Salomon 2005: 359–401.
[4] Falk and Bennett 2009.
[5] See Falk 2001.
[6] Bopearachchi 1990.

the Hindu Kush (Gandhāra in particular), however, exercised their power for another hundred years. A certain Archebios was the last Greek king to reign over Taxila at the arrival of the Indo-Scythian Maues, while Hermaios was the last Greek king to reign over Paropamisadae before the Yuezhi occupation.[7]

The Scythians and the Parthians in India

The pressure of invaders, including the Yuezhi, the Scythians (Sakas) and the Parthians, compelled the Greeks to progressively abandon their possessions. Around the middle of the first century BCE, a Scythian prince named Maues occupied Taxila. He is thought to be the king Moya mentioned in the copper-plate inscription of Patika found at Taxila in 1862, dated to the fifth day of the month of Panemus of the seventy-eighth year (of an unspecified era) of the great king Moga (Maues). Maues was succeeded by two kings with Greek names, Apollodotos II and Hippostratos.

Around 48 BCE, the Indo-Scythian Azes I became king of the provinces of Gandhāra and western Panjab. The inscription from Buner published by Harry Falk is of immense importance in the study of the Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian periods.[8] Contrary to a common belief that the successions of Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians and Indo-Parthians were based on bloody battles, this new inscription points to a peaceful transition of power. The inscription is engraved around a bowl probably found in the Buner area and records that the bowl was a present of Sanghamitra for the Lord, for the sage of the Sakya clan in the year of the maharaja Azes the Great during the reign of the Mahākastrapa Vasa-Abdagases, son of Mahapala-Suspala.[9] The document gives us the earliest known date of the use of Azes' name to define the era. While Azes was the absolute suzerain of the realm, it seems that Vasa-Abdagases had some political independence as *mahākastrapa* of the Buner region. Falk argues, 'Only 9 years have passed since the last great king Śpalarises lost the imperial powers to Azes, who himself continues the system, allotting mahākastrapa power to Mahāpāla-Suśpala and his son Vasa-Abdagases according to our plate, which I connect to the old family in the service of Vonones because of the śpala in the name of the father'.[10] About 10 CE the Scythian Rajuvula, who was satrap of Mathura (in the

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[7]   Bopearachchi and Pieper 1998: 215–19.
[8]   Falk 2006: 393–412.
[9]   Falk 2006: 395.
[10]   Falk 2006: 397.

middle Ganges valley), conquered the last Greek bastion at Sagala (Sialkot) in the eastern Panjab. With the reign of Strato II, Greek power in India came to a definite end.[11]

Gondophares, the founder of the Indo-Parthian kingdom, came to power towards the end of Azes II's reign.[12] The inscription on a dedicatory plaque from Takht-i-Bahi gives the year 26 as his regnal year and 103 as the beginning of his reign. According to the new chronology, the first year of his rule fell at the end of the first decade of the common era, as Azes I's era began in 48/7 BCE.[13]

The Arrival of the Kushans in Gandhāra

For the history of the Kushan dynasty, the Rabatak inscription is the most informative source on the genealogy of the ancestors of Kanishka I, the expansion of his kingdom, and the importance of Iranian and Indian divinities for his dynastic claims.[14] The inscription records that Kanishka's great grandfather was King Kujula Kadphises, his grandfather King Vima Tak[tu] or Tak[to], and his father Vima Kadphises. Kujula Kadphises and Vima Kadphises are also known to us by coins struck in their name. The reign of Kujula Kadphises can be dated approximately by combining Chinese sources and numismatic evidence. According to the Chinese annals titled *Hou Hanshu,* the *yabgu* (a title for Kushan royalty) who unified the Kushan Empire was called Qiujiuque. Historians and numismatists agree on identifying him as Kujula Kadphises, whose name appears on the coins as ΚΟΖΟΛΟ ΚΑΔΑΦΕΣ or ΚΟΖΟΛΑ ΚΑΔΑΦΕΣ in Greek and *Kujula kasa* or *Kuyula Kaphsa* in Kharosthi.[15] According to the same annals, Qiujiuque invaded the kingdom of Anxi[16] and captured Gaofu (Kabul), Puda (Pushkalavati), and Jibin (Kashmir) and died at the age of eighty.[17] Kujula may be responsible for minting some series imitating the types of posthumous Hermaios coins in the Arachosia and Paropamisadae regions. The key to understanding the demise of Indo-Greek power in Paropamisadae and Gandhāra at

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[11] Bopearachchi 1999b: 132–9.

[12] Bopearachchi 2008a: 49.

[13] According to the new chronology proposed by Falk and Bennett 2009.

[14] Sims-Williams and Cribb 1995/6: 75–96 and Sims-Williams 1998: 79–93.

[15] See for example Rosenfield 1967: 11.

[16] Perhaps the possession of the Indo-Parthians south of the Hindu Kush.

[17] For an excellent translation of the Chinese annals concerning this period, see Thierry 2005: 421–539, for the texts concerning Qiujiuque's conquests, see 493, text 7, and for the commentary, 478.

the hands of the Yuezhi lies in the different coinages struck in the name of Hermaios.[18] The Yuezhi, who had invaded Bactria, crossed the Hindu Kush mountains and conquered the Paropamisadae and Gandhāra, dethroning Hermaios, around 70 BCE. They were no doubt the same nomads who copied the silver tetradrachms of Heliocles I, the last Greek king to rule north of the Hindu Kush. After penetrating into the Paropamisadae, they began imitating the coins of Hermaios, as is also revealed by the find spots of his coins, both of his lifetime and posthumous, found in large quantities in Paropamisadae, Gandhāra and the region of Gardez-Ghazni.[19] At the tail-end of his coin series, Kujula issued coins denoting his dynastic affiliation as *Kujula kasa Kushana Yavugasa dhramatidasa* (of Kujula Kadphises, Kushan chief yagbu, steadfast in the law)[20] or *Kuyula Kadaphasa Kushanasa* (of Kujula Kadaphises, the Kushan).[21] The male portrait on the obverse of a regional issue of Kujula Kadphises is clearly inspired by that of the emperor Augustus on Roman coinage and constitutes a significant chronological marker.[22] Indeed, the silver denarius of Augustus used as a model provides a clear *terminus post quem* for the dating of the posthumous issues in the name of Hermaios. Moreover, the overstrikes of Kujula Kadphises on the coins of Gondophares indicate that Kujula ended Parthian rule in Paropamisadae and Gandhāra. If this hypothesis is correct, the rise of the Kushan Empire under Kujula Kadphises in these regions should be dated around the middle of the first century of our era, between 30 and 90 CE.

The identification of the second king of the Kushan dynasty mentioned in the Rabatak inscription is debatable. Some numismatists identify this king with the anonymous ruler known as Soter Megas.[23] He qualifies himself on his coins as 'great saviour' in the nominative case, instead of the usual genitive. Other scholars refute this identification with sound objections.[24] Four unique gold coins of Vima Kadphises commemorating his father Vima Taktu were found in a hoard of more than 4,500 Kushan gold coins in Peshawar in 2004, and clearly prove that the king there commemorated is not Soter Megas but rather Vima Taktu. Indeed, on the reverse of

[18]   Bopearachchi 1997: 189–213.

[19]   For a detailed study of the question, see Bopearachchi 1997: 190–98.

[20]   Mitchiner 1978: nos. 2898–2903.

[21]   Mitchiner 1978: nos. 2880–1.

[22]   Senior 2001: 220, B7–B9. Rosenfield 1967: 13. Rosenfield further argues (13–14) that the seated figure on the reverse of this series, wearing long trousers, a high pointed hat, and boots, and carrying a sword, is the depiction of Kujula himself.

[23]   Above all see Cribb in Sims-Williams and Cribb 1995/6:97–142.

[24]   For a summary of arguments put forward by G. Fussman, M. Alram, R. Göbl, and D. MacDowall against J. Cribb's hypothesis, see Bopearachchi 2003a: 669–73.

these coins a Greek legend reads, 'King Vima Kadphises, son of Vima Taktu the Kushan'.[25]

So far, Soter Megas seems to be an isolated ruler who has nothing in common with his immediate predecessor, Kujula Kadphises, or his immediate successor, Vima Kadphises, as is also attested by his coins found in isolation in many hoards.[26] The coins of Soter Megas found in stūpas such as the one at Tepe Zargaran at Bactra, recently excavated by the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan,[27] the one in Pushkalavti, and those in the valleys of Kabul and Swat prove the royal patronage of Soter Megas to Buddhism. A schist casket containing thirteen coins of Soter Megas was found in a reliquary stupa in Pushkalavati. The external stupa decoration is devoid of any images of the Buddha, suggesting that garlands and floral motifs alone were the primary iconographic choices for the period of Soter Megas.[28] Coins of Soter Megas were also found in the reliquaries from Rashuk at Tope Passani (six coins)[29] and Tope no. 3 of Bimaran (twenty-seven coins).[30]

Soter Megas' coinage is radically different from that of his predecessor and successor in terms of symbols, legends, denominations and above all types. Gérard Fussman has correctly suggested that Soter Megas was a usurper who interrupted, for a generation at least, the regular succession of Kujula's descendants.[31] If Soter Megas was a usurper, how should he be placed chronologically? Moreover, how can we explain the role of Vima Taktu, whose name is mentioned in the Rabatak inscription and in the commemorative series of Vima Kadphises, yet whose existence is known only through an extremely limited and isolated coinage?

According to *Hou Hanshu*, the second Kushan king, Yangaozhen, was the son of Qiujiuque (Kujula Kadphises), and was credited with the destruction of Tianzhu (India). After conquering India, Yangaozhen appointed a general to supervise and govern the region.[32] As argued by François

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[25] For a detailed study of these commemorative coins and the other coins in the hoard, see Bopearachchi 2008a: 3–56.

[26] The Phalai Hoard close to Malakad Agency contained nearly 500 pieces, the hoard of Chakdara 250 pieces, and the Barikot hoard 300 pieces. Another hoard, now in a private collection in San Francisco, most probably came from the middle Swat valley and is composed of more than 400 coins of Soter Megas alone. See Bopearachchi 2008a: 45–6.

[27] Besenval and Marquis 2009: 216–29.

[28] Bopearachchi, 2008a: 50–1.

[29] Masson, 'Memoirs on the Topes and Sepulchral Monuments of Afghanistan' in Wilson 1841: 94; Errington 1999: 213, pls. 11. 12.

[30] Wilson 1841: 72. Dargai, Malakand (in the Swat valley); a reliquary with five coins of Soter Megas, and in 2002 at Hadda, a reliquary with eleven coins of Soter Megas.

[31] Fussman 1998: 571–651, above all 612.

[32] See Thierry 2005: 493, text 7; 524, text 35.

Thierry,[33] Kujula died at the age of eighty and his son must have ascended the throne at quite an advanced age. If we read the Rabatak inscription literally, Qiujiuque is Kujula Kadphises and Yangaozhen is identifiable as Vima Taktu.[34]

The general to whom Yangaozhen (Vima Taktu) entrusted India or the usurper whose name we may never know may be Soter Megas. This would explain why Soter Megas became powerful enough to push the legitimate heir to the Kushan throne to a remote area, where he apparently struck only an extremely limited series of bronze coins with his name in Kharosthi. The finding of large quantities of coins struck by Soter Megas from Mathura to Turkmenistan indicates that his reign was long and that Vima Taktu probably died of old age some time before Soter Megas.

Vima Kadphises, the legitimate heir to the Kushan throne, may have been declared sole king of the whole Kushan Empire only after overpowering the usurper. The appearance of the title Soter Megas on some of his coins may suggest that he was the great saviour of the Kushan dynasty.[35] Gold coins of Vima Kadphises, as J.M. Rosenfield correctly points out, 'testify to the élan of a conquistador in their symbols of triumph and their imperious, aggressive style'.[36] The finding of more than 4,000 gold coins in the Peshawar treasure, the large majority struck by Vima Kadphises, may indicate that he promoted a very prosperous monetary economy. Vima Kadphises was also the founder of a bimetallic monetary system based on gold and copper, putting an end to the bronze coinage of Kujula Kadphises and Soter Megas. The gold coinage of Vima Kadphises was moulded into a well-defined monetary pattern based on staters and double staters. As the sole dynast of a vast kingdom, Vima Kadphises used his coin portraiture as a medium of propaganda to impress his subjects, the flaming shoulders suggesting superhuman qualities.[37] Moreover, his devotion to the Hindu god Śiva is attested on the coinage and signal a rupture with the Buddhist religious beliefs of his rival and usurper.

Rise and Fall of the Kushan Empire

The Kushan Empire reached its apogee around 127 CE with Kanishka I, the grandson of Vima Taktu.[38] His chronology is important because it is

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[33] Thierry 2005: 478–9.
[34] Thierry 2005: 493, text. 7.
[35] Göbl 1984: 3, 760–4.
[36] Rosenfield 1967: 18.
[37] See Carter 1994: 32.
[38] This date is based on Harry Falk's ground-breaking research, see Falk 2001: 121–36.

commonly believed that during his reign Gandhāran art was born. Kanishka I extended his empire into what is modern-day Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and North India as far as the middle Gangetic Valley. His main capital was most probably at Purushapura (Peshawar) with regional capitals in Begram (Afghanistan), Takshashila (Taxila, Pakistan) and Mathura (India). Although he favoured multireligious cults by honouring Zoroastrian, Greek, and Brahmanic deities, Kanishka is mostly remembered as a great patron of Buddhism. The diversity and syncretism characterizing Gandhāran Buddhist art from the time of Kanishka I resulted from many factors. Firstly, Kanishka's religious tolerance opened the doors to multicultural diversity. Secondly, the development of trade routes crossing Gandhāra made this fertile land a meeting point of different cultures.[39] Finally, the cultural, religious, and artistic heritage of the former political supremacies (Persians, Greeks, Scythians and Parthians) was still in vogue and penetrated Gandhāran art, making this school one of the richest in India.

Some scholars believe that it was under his royal patronage that the Fourth Buddhist Council was held in the Sarvāstivāda tradition, in the presence of 500 monks, at Jalandhar or in Kashmir. Although his conversion to Buddhism is disputable, it is undeniable that Buddhist art flourished in Gandhāra during his reign. His greatest contribution to Buddhist architecture was the Kanishka stupa at Peshawar in Pakistan, described by the Chinese pilgrim Xuan Zang as 600 to 700 Chinese 'feet' tall and covered in jewels.[40]

Kanishka I was succeeded by Huvishka around 150 CE and ruled for about thirty-eight years.[41] His coin types suggest that he continued the broad political and religious policy of his predecessor. Huvishka's rule was a period of retrenchment: the copper coinage plunged in weight from a standard of 16 g to about 10 to 11 g. Under his successor Vasudeva I, last of the Great Kushans who ascended to the throne around 188 CE, the quality and weight of the copper coinage continued to decline, dropping to 9 g. The name Vasudeva evokes the popular Hindu god: he was the first Kushan

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[39] Among these trade routes passing through Gandhara, the most important ones were: (1) towards Pataliputra (Patna), ancient capital of the Mauryas passing through Taxila and Mathura; (2) towards Ecbatana passing through Alexandria of the Caucasus (Begram) and Alexandria of Aria (Herat); (3) towards Iran through Alexandria of Arachosia (Kandahar); (4) towards Alexandria of Eschate or Outermost Alexandria (Leninabad) and Chinese Turkestan through Maracanda (Samarkand); and (5) towards the Persian Gulf and Red Sea and Egypt through the Indus river.

[40] These Chinese 'feet' are roughly equal to 180–210 metres (591–689 feet).

[41] The present chronology is based on Bopearachchi 2009b: 243–66.

king to be named after an Indian god. Hinduism became very popular during his reign, as indicated by the reverse type of his coinage depicting Śiva. Vasudeva's rule coincides with the invasion of the Sassanians and the establishment of the Indo-Sassanians or Kushans.

Gandhāra had been occupied by various Kidarite principalities from the mid-fourth century CE, but it is still unclear if power was transferred from the Kidarites directly to the Hephthalites. The Hephthalite seem to have entered Bactria early in the fifth century CE and pushed on towards Gandhāra. During their invasion, the Huns managed to capture the Sassanian king Peroz I and exchanged him for a ransom. It is known that the Huns invaded Gandhāra and the Panjab from the Kabul valley after vanquishing the Kidarite principalities. The Alchon ruler Toramana established his rule over Gandhāra and western Panjab, and was succeeded by his son Mihirakula in 520, when the capital was Sagala (Sialkot) in the Pakistani Panjab. It is difficult to believe that, even after the destruction brought by the Hephthalite invasion (about 460 CE), all forms of artistic creation came to a sudden end. Although little is known about this period, the Chinese pilgrim Faxian (one of China's greatest travellers of the fifth century) journeyed through the Peshawar valley and reported that Buddhism was flourishing in Gandhāra. A hundred years later, Sung-Yun travelled through this region in 518–21 and reported that the Huns had destroyed the country. Xuan Zang visited India around 644 and found Buddhism in decline in Gandhāra and Hinduism in the ascendant. Taxila, once the cradle of Buddhist civilization, was in ruins and Buddhist monasteries were deserted. Instead, Hindu temples were numerous and Hinduism was popular.

Hellenistic Art in Gandhāra

Thousands of coins issued by the Greek rulers circulated in Central Asia and India and the neighbouring regions, bearing depictions of Greek gods and goddesses and testifying to the prevalence of a Hellenistic culture in the area.[42] Zeus, Athena, Poseidon, Dionysos, Apollo, Artemis, Helios, Selene, Hermes, Nike, Tyche and Heracles were the most popular divinities appearing on the coinage.[43] Interestingly, most of these divinities appear in Gandhāran art in Buddhist and Hindu contexts as well. Several

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[42]   On the circulation of coins, see Bopearachchi 1999d.
[43]   On these different divinities, see Bopearachchi 1991: 377–85.

sovereigns of the independent Bactrian and Indo-Greek kingdoms legiti-
mized their kingship by identifying themselves with Alexander the Great
and using monetary types evoking his persona. The founder of the Graeco-
Bactrian kingdom, Diodotos ('gift of God'), introduced a thundering Zeus
on the reverse of his gold and silver coinage as a reminder of a similar
Zeus with sceptre and thunderbolt present on Alexander's silver monet-
ary type. Euthydemos chose Heracles as his major monetary type, both
because Heracles was popular in Magnesia on the Maeander, the Greek
city in Anatolia from which he originated,[44] and to identify himself with
Alexander, who associated himself with Heracles. Demetrios I, the son of
Euthydemos, portrays himself wearing an elephant scalp symbolizing
India, as Alexander had done a hundred years earlier. Lysias also adopted
the elephant scalp in his portrait on the obverse[45] and the motif of Heracles
crowning himself on the reverse.

On his monolingual silver coins, Antimachos I is depicted wearing the
kausia, a flat, broad-brimmed felt hat worn by Macedonian soldiers, high-
ranking officials, and even Alexander, to distinguish themselves from the
rest of the Greeks.[46] Menander I identified himself with Alexander the Great
by choosing Athena Alkidemos ('defender of the people'), the city-goddess
of Pella in Macedonia where Alexander was born.[47] Athena, holding a shield
or an aegis decorated with a Gorgoneion, wields her father Zeus's thunder-
bolt. This monetary type was so powerful that most of Menander's successors
adopted it on their coinages.[48] Scythian kings repeated on their coinages the
most popular Greek monetary types, such as Athena Alkidemos, Zeus with
a sceptre and Poseidon with a trident, but they also inaugurated a new type
on the obverse, representing the king on horseback wearing heavy armour
or cataphractus.[49] The cataphracti – heavily armoured horsemen – usually

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[44] See Bernard 1985: 131–3.

[45] See Bopearachchi 1991: pls. series 1 and 4.

[46] Polybius 4.4–5; Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.22. Fredricksmeyer holds the opinion that the *kausia* was
worn by tradition in Macedonia long before the time of Alexander III; see Fredricksmeyer
1986: 215–27. The other view is that the *kausia* did not appear in the Mediterranean region
until 325/4 BCE; see for example Kingsley 1991: 59–76.

[47] Brett 1950: 55–72.

[48] Athena Alkidemos was copied, without discontinuity, on the silver coins of the following Indo-
Greek kings: Agathocleia and Strato I, Strato I alone, Polyxenos, Amyntas, Epander, Thrason,
Nicias, Apollodotos II, Dionysios, Zoilus II, Apollophanes and Strato II and III. See the list in
Bopearachchi 1991: 378.

[49] Spalirises with Spalagadames, Spalirises and Spalirises with Azes depicted, as their principal
monetary type, the 'king on horseback wearing cataphractus and holding a spear' on their
silver and some series of bronze coins. Azes I and Azilises adopted the same type on most of
their coins. On coins usually attributed to Azes II, the king on horseback holds a whip. For

fought in columns, using their long spears against the infantry. The Indianized version of this type appears quite frequently in the Gandhāran context. A guardian wearing scale armour over a *dhoti* and holding a spear is one example that reveals Scythian influence on Gandhāran motifs.[50] When Mara is shown in the act of attacking the Buddha to prevent him from enlightenment, his soldiers are often depicted wearing a corset made of scales, an important element of the cataphractus.[51] In Gandhāran art the Hindu warrior god Skanda-Kārtikēya Kārtikēya, son of Śiva and Umā, wears a breastplate made of scales that emphasizes his combatant nature and he holds the *shakti*, the spear with which he destroyed the demon Tarakasura, as well as a cock.[52] Interestingly, Skanda-Kārtikēya is depicted outside Gandhāra without scaled armour, thus proving that Gandhāran artists were inspired by Scythian influences in the region. These pre-existing iconographies were further interpreted by Gandhāran artists who added indigenous Indianizing elements to make them more acceptable in a Buddhist context.

Greek Architecture and Plastic and Glyptic Art in Greater Gandhāra

The autonomy of local Greek rulers is also revealed in architecture, plastic and glyptic art. Unfortunately, in Gandhāra there are still very few indisputable Greek cities or Greek strata known; Greek levels of Taxila still remain unexcavated.[53] Attempts to find Greek monumental architecture in ancient Pushkalavati-Charsadda have so far been unsuccessful.[54] Excavations at Manek Rai Dheri (Sarai Saleh), close to Haripur, have been interrupted,[55] and only the Italian excavations at Barikot have produced any positive results.[56] Easily available Buddhist art in Gandhāra has deterred the excavations of complicated Greek and Scytho-Parthian strata. In Afghanistan as well, with the exception of Ai Khanum, we know very little about Greek levels of ancient cities.[57] The well-organized Greek city of Ai Khanum,

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a summary of these types and a detailed discussion of the cataphractus, see Bopearachchi 2003b: 19–45.

[50] See for example, the catalogue Gandhara 2009/10, no. 225.

[51] Gandhara 2009/10, nos. 162 and 163.

[52] Gandhara 2009/10, nos. 111 and 112.

[53] The excavations were begun in 1913 and lasted for twenty years; see Marshall 1951.

[54] See for example, Coningham and Ali 2007.

[55] Durani, Qamar and Khan 1997: 213–32.

[56] Callieri 2007:133–64.

[57] For a summary of these excavations in Afghanistan, see Bopearachchi 1999a: 88–91.

excavated by the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan under Paul Bernard between 1964 and 1978, is the best example of the architectural skills of the Greeks ruling Bactria. The location on a triangular area at the confluence of the Oxus and the Kokcha rivers seems to have been strategic, with the city functioning as a military outpost to control the eastern territories.[58] The residential quarters and public buildings such as the royal palace, administrative quarters, theatre, gymnasium and temples were built on the lower portion of the site, which was less exposed to wind. A huge palace in Graeco-Bactrian architecture, reminiscent of formal Persian palatial architecture, was built in the centre of the lower city. The palace comprised courtyards surrounded by Corinthian, Doric and Ionian colonnades, numerous corridors, residential and administrative buildings, and ceremonial rooms. A classical theatre, with thirty-five rows of seats seating 4,000 to 6,000 people, was equipped with three loges for the rulers. Its size was considerable by classical standards, being larger than the theatre at Babylon. The largest temple was built according to a Mesopotamian model of massive, closed walls. The outer wall was decorated with niches, and the structure apparently hosted a monumental statue of a seated Zeus-Mithra. The gymnasium (100 by 100 m), one of the largest of antiquity, had spaces for physical training and large lecture halls built around an impressive inner courtyard devoted to intellectual activities. A dedication in Greek to Hermes and Heracles was found engraved on a pillar. This inscription and those found in Kandahar and in Kuliab prove that the Greek language was kept alive for two to three centuries.[59]

A group of sculptures of Greek gods, philosophers and athletes found in Ai Khanum attests to local artistic skills and workmanship, while suggesting a rather conventional and quite outdated stylistic treatment of the figures.[60] As Paul Bernard has pointed out, the Graeco-Bactrian sculptors of Ai Khanum should be recognized for their innovations in monumental statues and mural bas-relief.[61] Indeed, in producing these statues they used a technique rarely seen in Greece during the Hellenistic period, one that involved the construction of a framework of lead rods or wood onto which figures were modelled. The most significant finds

[58] For a recent update of the ancient city, see Bernard in the catalogue Afghanistan 2008: 81–128 and Bernard 2009: 33–56. The private houses of the inner city of Ai Khanum were recently published by Lecuyot 2013.

[59] Fifty-nine inscriptions from Kuliab and Kandahar were published by Bernard, Pinault and Rougemont 2004 : 227–356.

[60] Bernard 1969: 313–55.

[61] Bernard 1982: 150–9.

from the main temple were a sandaled foot and fragments of fingers all larger than life size, belonging to an acrolithic cult statue which once stood in the cella.[62] The faience head of a Graeco-Bactrian king, part of another acrolith statue, surfaced accidentally in the vicinity of Ai Khanum.[63] The marble head, torso, and limbs of a Bodhisattva from Tahkal Bala (Peshawar) dated to the Kushan period are also part of an acrolithic statue.[64] When referring to this marble head, John Boardman pointed out that the classicizing style and the excellence of the carving has hardly a match in the contemporary Mediterranean world.[65] This marble head is the perfect example of the syncretism of Buddhist iconography and Hellenistic technique that developed in the region after the decline of the Greek rulers.

Greek Interaction with Indian, Buddhist and Hindu Iconography

At the time the Kushans reached their apogee, cultural interactions and pre-existent Hellenistic artistic forms facilitated a progressive Indianization. Art historians have repeatedly insisted upon the borrowings of Greek architectural elements, like Corinthian capitals, in Buddhist art. Corinthian capitals with stylized alternating rows of acanthus leaves were adapted to a Buddhist context by adding a seated Buddha in the centre,[66] a standing Buddha,[67] a female devotee holding a reliquary,[68] or a charioteer driving a quadriga.[69] The Greek Tyche (city-goddess), already popular in Indo-Greek coins[70] and depicted in Buddhist art holding the cornucopia,[71] is assimilated in Gandhāran art with Hariti, and she often appears next to the consort Pancika, the god of wealth,[72] as in the Iranian tradition of Pharro and Ardoxsho.

Heracles was popular in Central Asia and India as the symbol of terrestrial glory. Six bronze statuettes of Heracles have been found so far: one at Ai

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[62] Bernard 1969 : 313–55.

[63] Bopearachchi 1998a: 23–30.

[64] Bopearachchi 2007: 119–32, pls. 5.1–5.10.

[65] Boardman 1994: 145.

[66] Gandhara 2009/10, no. 229.

[67] Gandhara 2009/10, no. 230.

[68] Gandhara 2009/10, no. 186.

[69] Gandhara 2009/10, no. 187.

[70] See for example the silver coins of Hippostratos; cf. Bopearachchi 1991: pl. 64, series 1 and 2.

[71] Gandhara 2009/10, no. 64.

[72] Gandhara 2009/10, no. 103.

Khanum,[73] four in Afghanistan,[74] and another recently found in the vicinity of Ai Khanum.[75] This last statuette shows a standing Heracles – young, nude and beardless – holding a lion skin and a club, a posture that was later adopted by the Indo-Greek king Theophlios on his silver coinage.[76] It is not at all surprising to find so many images of Heracles in Ai Khanum and its vicinity, since the local gymnasium was dedicated to this divinity.

When Vima Kadphises decided to depict Śiva on the gold coinage commemorating his father, the Hindu god appeared in the guise of Heracles,[77] while in the later series of the same king the nude Śiva is clearly ithyphallic.[78] Upon closer examination, it becomes clear that the earlier type is modelled on the Heracles portrayed on the coins of Kujula Kadphises,[79] grandfather of Vima Kadphises. The skin of an antelope or a tiger, draped around Śiva's left hand, is inspired by the lion skin of Heracles on the coins of Kujula Kadphises, which are in turn modelled on the Greek, Parthian, and Scythian prototypes inaugurated by the Graeco-Bactrian Demetrios I. A close connection between Heracles and Śiva is also visible in the box-shaped stone seal from Begram now at the British Museum.[80] On one of the faces of the seal, an ithyphallic Śiva holds a combined trident and battle-axe, and a club. The god is three headed: the central head is beardless, the one to the right is that of an old man, and the one to the left that of an antelope. On the other faces are an embracing couple, a Kushan king at a fire altar, and a depiction of Heracles holding his club and lion skin. The appearance of two physically similar gods, one Indian and the other Greek, with their clearly identifiable attributes, enables us to observe the transition from one form to the other. On another Gandhāran sculpture, the winged Atlas appears in the guise of Heracles, as indicated by the lion skin worn over his head and knotted at his neck.[81] A discreet allusion to Śiva is given by the third eye carved horizontally on the forehead, thus creating an interesting combination of iconographies related to the three divinities. Vajrapāṇi, the thunderbolt-holding protector of Buddha, is depicted reinterpreting the traditional pose of Heracles: a *vajra*

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[73] Bernard 1974: 280–308. For a colour photograph, see the catalogue Afghanistan 2008: 113, no. 14.

[74] Three bronze statuettes in a private collection were published in the catalogue Crossroads of Asia 1992: 99–102, nos. 102–3.

[75] The catalogue De l'Indus à l'Oxus 2003: 116–17, no. 89.

[76] Bopearachchi 1991: 307–8, series 2 and 3.

[77] Bopearachchi 2008a: 6, nos. 1–4.

[78] Bopearachchi 2008a: 7 10, 11, nos. 12–45.

[79] Rosenfield 1967: pl. 1, nos 1–3; Mitchiner 1978: 390–1, nos. 2860–72; Bopearachchi 1997: 189–213.

[80] See Rosenfield 1967: 103, pl. XVI, seal 6; Göbl 1984: Taf. 177, fig. 8; Giuliano 2004: 91, fig. 30.

[81] See Bopearachchi 2008a: fig. 7.

(thunderbolt) substitutes for the usual club.[82] In one instance, on a relief, he holds both *vajra* and club.[83] The image of Vajrapāṇi closest to the Greek model is that in the British Museum.[84] Here the resemblance to Heracles is evoked by the lion skin he wears knotted at his neck. The Heracles prototype visible on the silver and gold coins of Euthydemos[85] is reinterpreted in the stucco sculpture of Vajrapāṇi from Tepe-Shotor in Afghanistan.[86] The bearded head and the muscular body of the hero have features reminiscent of the Lysippan style, the lion's head is visible over the left shoulder, and in one hand a club or perhaps a bone is visible.[87] Although it is difficult to define the exact role of Vajrapāṇi in the historical Buddha's life, he appears as companion of the Bodhisattva Shakyamuni from the moment of the Great Departure, at the beginning of his religious life, and in almost all the episodes connected with the Buddha Siddhārtha Gautama's life until his *parinirvana*.[88] Interestingly, Vajrapāṇi in the guise of Heracles is absent from contemporaneous Buddhist art in India, for example, that of Amaravati and Mathura. Therefore, Heracles-Vajrapāṇi must be read as a Gandhāran invention derived from the many numismatic, glyptic, and plastic depictions of Heracles inherited from Greek, Scythian and Parthian predecessors.

The Indian conquest of Alexander the Great has a mythic analogy in the Indian triumph of Dionysos. Like Heracles, Dionysos, the god of wine, inspired many Buddhist artists of Central Asia and Gandhāra.[89] As far as

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[82]   Foucher defines the function of the vajra as a symbolic instrument of his master's magic power; Foucher, II, 1918: 1, 58–9. On the question of Vajrapāṇi and his role in Gandharan Buddhist art, and for an excellent summarization of different hypotheses put forward by different scholars, see Santoro1979: 293–341.

[83]   This relief, which was in the National Museum of Kabul, depicts the Buddha looking with unblinking eyes at the *bodhi* tree that gave him shelter to attain enlightenment. Vajrapāṇi in the guise of Heracles is shown seated looking at the Buddha holding the *vajra* with the left hand and with the right holding the club that rests on the ground. This relief was published by Santoro1986: 49–59, fig. 18; Quagliotti 1991/2: 102–3, figs. 18–20; also see Tanabe 2006, figs. 106–7. However, our definition of this scene differs from the hypotheses put forward by the above mentioned scholars. We believe that to the left is the Buddha leaving the *bodhimaṇḍa* being perfectly enlightened. To the right, the same Buddha is shown seated at a distance from the *bodhi* tree gazing at the vriksha-devata, in other words the sacred tree. While the muscular middle-aged Vajrapāṇi looks at the Buddha holding both *vajra* and a club, Pṛthvī (Earth) who witnessed the great event, pays respects to the Buddha in añjali mudrā as before. We have here a seated Buddha with unblinking eyes. The other important event taking place in this relief is the Brahmā's invitation to expound the Law.

[84]   Zwalf 1996: 230–1, fig. 293.

[85]   Bopearachchi 1991: series 11 and 12.

[86]   Tarzi 1976: 381–410.

[87]   Giuliano 2008: 103–26.

[88]   See catalogue Gandhara 2009/10, figs. 46, 157–9, 161, 164, 172–3.

[89]   Dionysos' exploits in the East are narrated in Euripides' *Bacchae* 14–19.

Indo-Greek coins are concerned, Dionysos was not as popular as Heracles. Only the nickel and bronze coins of Agathocles and Pantaleon depict on the obverse the bust of Dionysos wearing a wreath and holding a thyrsus over his left shoulder, and on the reverse a panther standing with raised paw.[90] In other forms of Hellenistic art Dionysos enjoyed much popularity in Gandhāra, as John Boardman argues in his fascinating book on the diffusion of Classical art.[91] Judging from the archaeological findings, this god was particularly popular among the Scythians. In the Tiliya Tepe tombs, objects depicting Dionysos and members of his escort were given an outstanding place.[92] On a pair of clasps, the god is depicted riding a hybrid monster with Ariadne.[93] Silenus, Dionysos' companion and tutor, is depicted holding a rhyton. On the belt worn by the prince of Tiliya Tepe, Dionysos is portrayed holding a wine cup and riding a panther, seated side-saddle.[94] Dionysos became popular during the Kushan period. As the god who taught Indians how to cultivate the grape, he is shown with Ariadne drinking wine prepared by his companions.[95] Sileni, satyrs, Pan and other fertility demons are shown on Buddhist reliefs drinking, dancing, harvesting, kissing or indulging in sexual intercourse.[96]

These Dionysian scenes may be understood as a symbolic representation of the Middle Region of *gandharva* or *yakshas*. The numerous panels depicting Dionysian scenes were certainly used to evoke the heavenly nature of the Middle Region.[97] Martha Carter has pointed out that as capricious spirits of nature, *yakshas* in Gandhāra were offered grape wine and were thought of as roistering sensual demigods inhabiting a delightful paradise. She further argued that this was a more accessible and no doubt attractive afterlife for the ethnically mixed and more hedonistically oriented Buddhist converts.[98] Moreover, Dionysian scenes represent the stratified vision of the Indian cosmology as narrated in the Vedic literature.[99]

[90] Bopearachchi 1991: pl. 7, series 4–8 and pl. 9, series 4–5.
[91] Boardman 2003: 96–7, 145–6.
[92] The site was excavated in 1978–79 by a Soviet-Afghan mission of archaeologists led by Sarianidi 1980: 125–31; Sarianidi1985; for a comprehensive study of the objects, see Boardman 2003: 348–74.
[93] The catalogue Afghanistan 2008: 286–7, fig. 136.
[94] Afghanistan 2008: 269, fig. 107.
[95] See the catalogue Gandhara 2009/10: 100, fig. 34.
[96] Gandhara 2009/10: 100–2, figs. 34–36, 38 and 39.
[97] The catalogue Art of Gandhara 2002: 74–6.
[98] Carter 1968: 121–41 and 1992: 52–60.
[99] This hypothesis is developed by the present author in a video talk, see http://hcbss.stanford. edu/event/alexander-great-and-dionysus-india-greek-interaction-early-buddhist-art.

Thus, the Greek-Macedonian conquests in Central Asia and India at the end of the fourth century BCE continued to have an impact for another six centuries on the artistic expressions of Gandhāran artists under the direction of both native Indian and Inner Asian rulers. Dionysos, the god of ecstasy and intoxication, perfectly exemplifies the composite iconographies that resulted from cultural interactions of Central Asia and India with the Hellenistic world. However, following a transitional period, Buddhist and Hindu iconography developed into a codified orthodoxy in which textual descriptions were carried out with scrupulous accuracy.

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11 | Enclosure Sites, Non-Nucleated Settlement Strategies and Political Capitals in Ancient Eurasia

MICHELLE NEGUS CLEARY

Introductory Remarks

Walled enclosure sites dating from the Bronze Age to Early Medieval periods are found across Eurasia in a variety of ecological zones: steppe, desert, oases, mountains and fertile valleys. They are often very large in size and were purpose-built to specific design schemas, constructed from many different materials including stone, earth and mud-brick. The lack of permanent settlement evidence from within fortified enclosures indicates that these sites served other, non-residential functions and that an alternative urban and settlement model should be considered. It will be argued here that the large, walled enclosure sites were not conventional urban settlements but were far more than large cattle corrals. Instead, they were key nodes in non-nucleated, low-density, agro-pastoral settlement systems associated with mobile, agro-pastoral polities and empires.

Recent findings from the fortified enclosure site of Akchakhan-kala, or Kazakly-yatkan as it has also been known, support this interpretation of Eurasian walled sites. Akchakhan-kala dates from the late third century BCE–second century CE and is located in the ancient oasis of Khorezm (Chorasmia or Khwarizm), in the west of modern Uzbekistan. The results of recent archaeological investigations at the key site of Akchakhan-kala and other settlement remains from the Amu Darya delta will be presented to illustrate the character of this non-urban settlement pattern. Large fortified enclosure sites like Akchakhan-kala were enclaves for elites that served as political and ceremonial capitals. New spatial and temporal analyses of the Khorezmian oasis presented here will show that settlements most commonly occurred in unfortified, low density and non-nucleated settlement zones that extended along water supply canals or river channels rather than within fortified sites. This demonstrates that there was a limited sedentary population with the implication that a significant proportion of the population would have been mobile.

The Khorezmian settlement evidence may be compared with that of other contemporary Eurasian societies and Iranian states. Similar non-nucleated settlement patterns can be identified elsewhere in Inner Eurasia and are associated with agro-pastoral groups and itinerant ruling elites in pre-Hellenistic Central Asian oases, mobile steppe polities and Achaemenid Iran. This suggests that the Khorezmian settlement system was part of a wider Eurasian settlement adaptation that was the result of regional cultural, socio-economic, political and environmental conditions. These types of fortified enclosure sites were important nodes constructed in the landscape as political and ceremonial capitals for agro-pastoral mobile states.

This examination of walled sites formed part of my doctoral thesis, which analysed urbanism, fortified sites and settlement patterns in Western Central Asia during the Late Iron Age to early historic periods.[1] It is based on my work with the Karakalpak-Australian Archaeological Expedition in western Uzbekistan which investigates the ancient Khorezmian archaeological landscape of the Amu-darya delta. This is a collaborative project between the University of Sydney and the Karakalpak Research Institute of the Humanities (KRIH), headed by Professor Alison Betts (Sydney) and between 1995 and 2015 by the late Professor Vadim Nikolaich Yagodin (KRIH). This project has been generously funded by the Australian Research Council, the National Geographic Society and a volunteer programme.[2]

Mobility and Gradations of Nomadism

Recent scholarship on the Eurasian steppe has established that the paradigm of mobility is highly appropriate to this region. The assumption that the oasis was primarily inhabited by sedentary agrarian peoples, and that the steppe was exclusively associated with pastoral nomads, over-simplifies a more complex situation. Mobility is a more appropriate framework, which is inclusive of the variety of mixed strategies employed by both steppe and oasis dwellers.[3]

In response to dynamic environmental, political, economic and ideological contexts the inhabitants of the Eurasian steppe employed a variety

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[1] Negus Cleary 2015a.

[2] Australian Research Council (ARC) grants A10009046, DP0556232, DP0877805, DP130101268, the National Geographic Society, private contributors and a volunteer scheme. My own PhD research has been generously supported by the Waitt-National Geographic grant W68-09; the University of Sydney Carlyle Greenwell Bequest; and the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation's Catherine Southwell-Keely Travel Grant.

[3] Baker Brite 2011: 9; Frachetti 2008.

of subsistence strategies in their social and economic lives. There is great variation and adaptability in the diverse subsistence strategies employed by mobile pastoral groups, ranging from 'pure' pastoralism with fully mobile cattle grazing, to partially sedentary or fully sedentary mixed agro-pastoralism, to seasonally transhumant pastoralism, and including predatory raiding and trade practices.[4] With such diversity, the defining characteristic of pastoral societies should be their dynamic adaptability.[5] As Salzman has stated: 'We must also keep in mind that "settled" and "nomadic", rather than being two types, are better thought of as opposite ends of a continuum with many gradations of stability and mobility'.[6]

This condition of variability has necessitated the use of a new paradigm – 'mobile' or 'mobility'. This paradigm is more inclusive of varied and flexible forms of adaptation that employ a variety of strategies for subsistence and production. For example, 'mobility' accommodates a diverse range of socio-economic conditions, where some groups within a society move periodically and others remain settled; where mobile pastoral production is engaged in at the same time as long-term sedentary practices are maintained; where pastoral and agricultural strategies are utilized but hunting and gathering also forms a major part of subsistence; and where some groups within a society are tethered for crops and flocks but regularly travel for mercantile or raiding purposes.[7]

Recent scholarship on Eurasian archaeology has established that mobility more appropriately describes the kinds of diverse and dynamic productive strategies employed by ancient Eurasian societies.[8] Work by scholars such as Bernbeck, Chang, Cribb, Frachetti and Rouse employ this more inclusive view of the lifeways of ancient pastoral peoples.[9] For example, Chang and her colleagues have studied the unfortified settlements of Iron Age communities in the centre of the Kazakh steppe and this work has demonstrated the mixed agro-pastoral subsistence strategies and long-term sedentary practices employed by steppe inhabitants.[10]

This framework of 'mobility' is highly relevant for examining past inhabitants of both the steppe and the oasis, as supported by the archaeological record. Pastoralism, including transhumant pastoralism, has always played

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[4] Cribb 1991; Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980; Irons 1974; Salzman 2002.

[5] Cribb 1991: 16–22; Chang 2008: 331–4; Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980: 18; Frachetti 2008: 368–9, 372; Houle and Broderick 2011; Salzman 2002, 2004.

[6] Salzman 2002: 256. See Cribb (1991: 16) who also wrote about such a 'continuum'.

[7] Baker Brite 2011: 8–9; Bernbeck 2008; Frachetti 2008.

[8] Baker Brite 2011: 9; Frachetti 2008.

[9] Bernbeck 2008; Chang 2008; Cribb 1991; Frachetti 2008; Rouse and Frachetti 2009.

[10] Chang et al. 2003; Chang 2008, 2012.

an important role in the oases despite their suitability for irrigation agriculture.[11] Mobility is a framework that better describes this more complicated picture of diverse subsistence and production strategies being employed in both steppe and oases, of which herding livestock and periodic movement was one.[12]

Mobility is also more inclusive of multi-cultural situations that frequently occur in Eurasian places due to the nomadic, migratory and invasive nature of some groups historically. There is a long history of nomadic groups conquering and ruling sedentary or semi-sedentary agro-pastoral communities in the steppe and oases, particularly in Central Asia. These nomadic conquerors became the ruling elites, for example as in the case of the Kushans, Parthians and Mongols.[13]

Khorezmian Oasis Enclosure Sites

Khorezm was an ancient state located in the desert oasis of the Amu Darya river delta, south of the Aral Sea. This archaeological culture is characterized by the sudden appearance and proliferation of many fortified enclosure sites from the seventh/sixth centuries BCE – the fourth century CE, the Archaic, Early Antique and Late Antique Khorezmian periods (Table 11.1). Tolstov and other Soviet-era scholars interpreted this culture as a centralized, sedentary, agricultural state following Wittfogel's hydraulic state theory.[14] In this interpretation, the fortified sites, in particular the large fortified enclosure sites, were urban settlements from which an extensive canal system and irrigation agriculture were controlled and maintained. However, the archaeological evidence that we have now from Khorezmian walled sites does not support the idea of these sites as urban settlements. In fact, there is little evidence that they were used as permanent settlements at all, except in a few cases.[15] Within this pre-existing model, the fortified sites are seen as evidence of violent conflict and state hegemony. However, recent discoveries support an alternative interpretation in which fortified enclosures served a variety of purposes, defensive and military, but were also associated with the pastoral economy and a mobile lifeways. I suggest

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[11] Baker Brite 2011; Hiebert 1994: 6–8; Holt 1989: 31; Kim 2013: 31–5; Moore et al. 1994: 423–6; Sala 2003; Stride 2004: 188, 191. See also discussion in Negus Cleary 2013: 78–81.

[12] Baker Brite 2011: 5–9; Chang 2008; Frachetti 2008; Frachetti et al. 2010; Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2007; Rogers, Ulambayar and Gallon: 2005.

[13] Andrews 1978; de Clavijo 1859; Rapin 2007; Stride, Rondelli and Mantellini 2009: 80–3.

[14] Negus Cleary 2013: 76–7, 2015a: 43–7; Stride, Rondelli and Mantellini 2009: 74–5.

[15] Negus Cleary 2013, 2015a, 2015b.

Table 11.1 The current Khorezmian periodization as established by Tolstov (1948a; 1962).

Era	Period	Type site or well-investigated site	Date range
Early Iron Age	Amirabad culture (= Late Andronovo)	Yakke Parsan 2	9th–8th centuries BCE[a] (10th–8th centuries BCE)[b]
Iron Age	Kuiusai, early	Kuiusai 2 settlement, 7th – 6th centuries BCE.	7th–6th centuries BCE
	Kuiusai, late		5th–4th centuries BCE
	Archaic (Khorezmian)	Kiuzely-gyr	7th/6th–5th century BCE
		Dingil'dzhe	mid-5th century BCE
		Khazarasp, lower levels	6th/5th century BCE
		Kalaly-gyr 1 (transitional)[c]	5th/4th century BCE
Late Iron Age/ Antique periods	Early Antique ('Kangiui')	Koi-krylgan-kala (lower horizon)	Early 'Kangiui', 4th–3rd centuries BCE
		Koi-krylgan-kala (upper horizon)	Late 'Kangiui', 2nd century BCE – early 1st century CE
		Dzhanbas-kala; Kunya-uaz (lower horizon)	
	Late Antique ('Kushan')	Koi-krylgan-kala (upper horizon); Akchakhan-kala; Kunya-uaz; Ayaz-kala 3 and Ayaz-kala farmsteads.	Early 'Kushan', 1st–2nd centuries CE
		Kunya-uaz; Kanga-kala 1; Mangyr-kala; Toprak-kala Sultan-uiz-dag.	Late 'Kushan', 3rd–4th centuries CE
Early Medieval	'Kushan-Afrighid'	Toprak-kala Sultan-uiz-dag Kara-tepe 1	4th–5th centuries CE
	'Afrighid' (including Kerder/Hephthalite)	Ayaz-kala 2; Teshik-kala Kuyuk-kala (Kerder)	5th–8th centuries CE

[a]   Tolstov 1962: 68.

[b]   Rapoport 1991.

[c]   Helms and Yagodin 1997: 46.

that these types of enclosure sites are indicative of cultural ties with nor-
thern, steppic socio-economic and political traditions.

Akchakhan-Kala

Akchakhan-kala is one of the largest Khorezmian enclosure sites and its
high-status architecture, artefacts and rich corpus of mural artwork indicate
its importance as a centre for ruling elites. The site is a large, double enclos-
ure site located in the central oasis of the southern Akcha-darya delta.

Akchakhan-kala is buried in a deep and extensive sand dune field.
This has made excavation and archaeological prospection very difficult.
However, the KAAE project has continued excavations since 1996 and
has provided an exceptional level of detail about the monumental archi-
tecture, fortifications and mural art.[16] In addition, geophysical surveys,
feature and artefact surveys and remote-sensing analyses that I under-
took for my PhD thesis have also contributed to our knowledge of this
important capital.

The site is delimited by impressive mud-brick and rammed-earth for-
tification walls built in the typical Khorezmian style.[17] The enclosures
are approximately rectangular in shape and the primary enclosure, the
Upper Enclosure, is 330 × 375 m and has an area of 12.4 ha (Fig.11.1).
The secondary or Lower Enclosure is attached to the south-eastern and
south-western sides of the Upper Enclosure. It measures 620 × 685 m
and encloses an overall area of 42.6 ha.[18] (Figure 11.1) The fortification
walls are built as double galleried walls with a central corridor in between,
the archers' gallery (Figure.11.2). The Upper Enclosure fortification walls
were two storeys in height, and possibly included a wall-walk and parapet
above the second storey. Arrow-shaped loopholes pierce the external wall
and impressive projecting, rectangular towers line the walls. There is also
a complex of fortification outworks surrounding the enclosures, includ-
ing two ditches or moats and outer cover walls. The Upper Enclosure was
accessed via three monumental and highly imposing barbican-style gate-
ways.[19] The depth of the sand dune field and the aridity of the area has
aided in preserving the Upper Enclosure walls to a height of 10–12 m. The

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[16] See publications by the KAAE: Betts et al. 2009, 2015, 2016; Dodson et al. 2015; Helms and
     Yagodin 1997; Helms et al. 2001; 2002; Kidd 2012; Kidd and Baker Brite 2015; Kidd and Betts
     2010; Yagodin et al. 2009.
[17] See Khozhaniyazov 2006.
[18] Negus Cleary 2015a: 172.
[19] For excavation results from the eastern gateway, see Betts et al. 2009: 40–3.
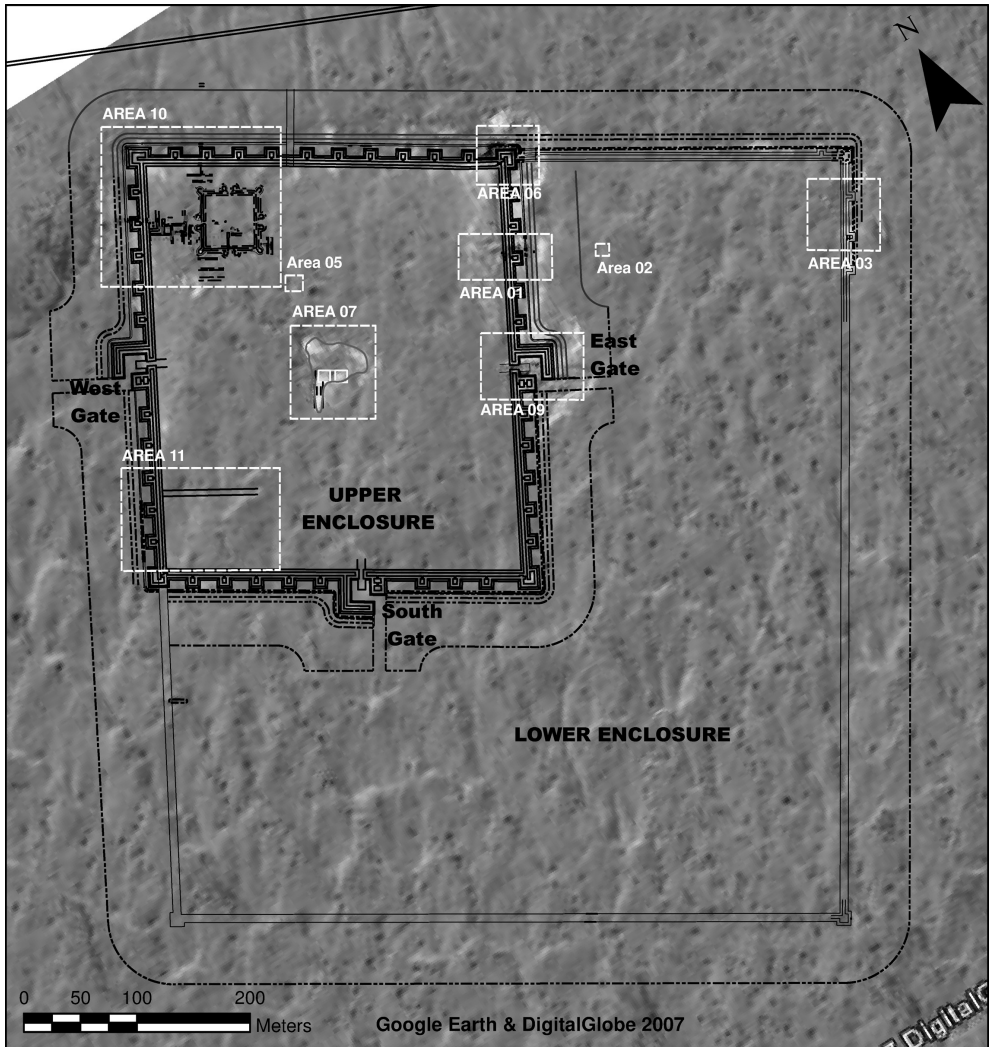
Figure 11.1 Akchakhan-kala site plan with areas marked (M. Negus Cleary)

enclosure walls of Akchakhan-kala had an undoubted defensive and military function.[20]

An absolute chronology of the site has been established based on calibrated radio-carbon dates from secure excavated contexts. These show that the site was constructed in the late third century BCE (Early Antique period), and remained in use until the mid-second century CE (beginning

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[20] For a discussion of the military aspects of the fortifications, see Betts et al. 2009; Khozhaniyazov 2006: 49–52.

Figure 11.2 Photo of the excavated north-eastern corner tower of the AK Upper Enclosure (Area 06) from the Lower Enclosure fortification walls. The tops of the arrow-shaped loopholes are visible and the junction of the Lower Enclosure fortification walls with the Upper Enclosure corner tower. (Photo by M. Negus Cleary, 2009)

of the Late Antique period), when all areas were abandoned. There was a great siege event that included destruction and burning of parts of the Upper Enclosure fortifications around the mid-first century BCE.[21] The excavation results suggest that occupation and construction periods were relatively brief and episodic in some areas and perhaps longer and more continuous in others with intermittent phases of abandonment, decay and rebuilding.[22]

Archaeological investigations so far at Akchakhan-kala have not uncovered evidence of dwellings, domestic occupation contexts, or networks of streets or other infrastructure such as water supply systems. There are also few indications of production or mercantile activities. The site is a purpose-built

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[21] Betts et al. 2009: 44.
[22] See Betts et al. 2009: 44; Negus Cleary 2015a: 188–92.

complex of large, enclosed and heavily fortified spaces with ceremonial and monumental buildings at its heart. There is little indication of it having been used as a conventional nucleated permanent settlement. In fact, the enclosures appear to have contained a large proportion of open space rather than densely built-up settlement.

The remains of substantial architecture were exposed above the sand in the Upper Enclosure; no similar structural remains have been exposed in the Lower Enclosure.[23] The structures within the Upper Enclosure consist of three monumental buildings: the Area 07 Central Monument; Area 10 Ceremonial Complex; and the Area 11 monumental building (Figure 11.1). These were all elite buildings constructed on an impressive scale. The Area 07 Central Monument was positioned at the very centre of the Upper Enclosure which was characterized by an access ramp leading to a barrel-vaulted two-storey structure on a mud-brick platform that appears to have been ceremonial or commemorative in nature. Area 10 was a complex of monumental halls, corridors and courts based around a central, quadrangular, enclosure-style building. Preliminary excavations in Area 11 have shown it to have been a small fortress with two Early Medieval construction and occupation phases set over an earlier monumental building contemporary with those of Areas 7 and 10. These buildings are the only structures found so far within the 42.6 ha of the enclosures.

Area 10 Ceremonial Complex

The Area 10 complex has been the focus of the last ten field seasons of excavation for the KAAE project. It is an extensive complex focused around a building constructed in a fortified style with a central court and columned hall (Figure 11.3). The central building is organized in the form of a quadrangular enclosure, with a perimeter corridor set between double walls.[24] This use of a distinctly martial architectural style with thick, battered double exterior walls, projecting towers and loopholes was also used for monumental buildings within other enclosure sites.[25] This choice of a military architectural style as appropriate for a royal and ceremonial building may

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[23] See remote-sensing and pedestrian survey results in Negus Cleary 2015a: 201–6, 240, 272.

[24] This includes rounded projecting towers and loopholes, which have been excavated from near the southern gateway.

[25] For example, the Ayaz-kala 3 palatial building was similarly fortified and predated the enclosure (Bolelov 1998: 134). The temple of Tillya-tepe in Sogdia was also built along similar lines and in a similar style to Akchakhan-kala Area 10 building (Sarianidi 1980, 1989).
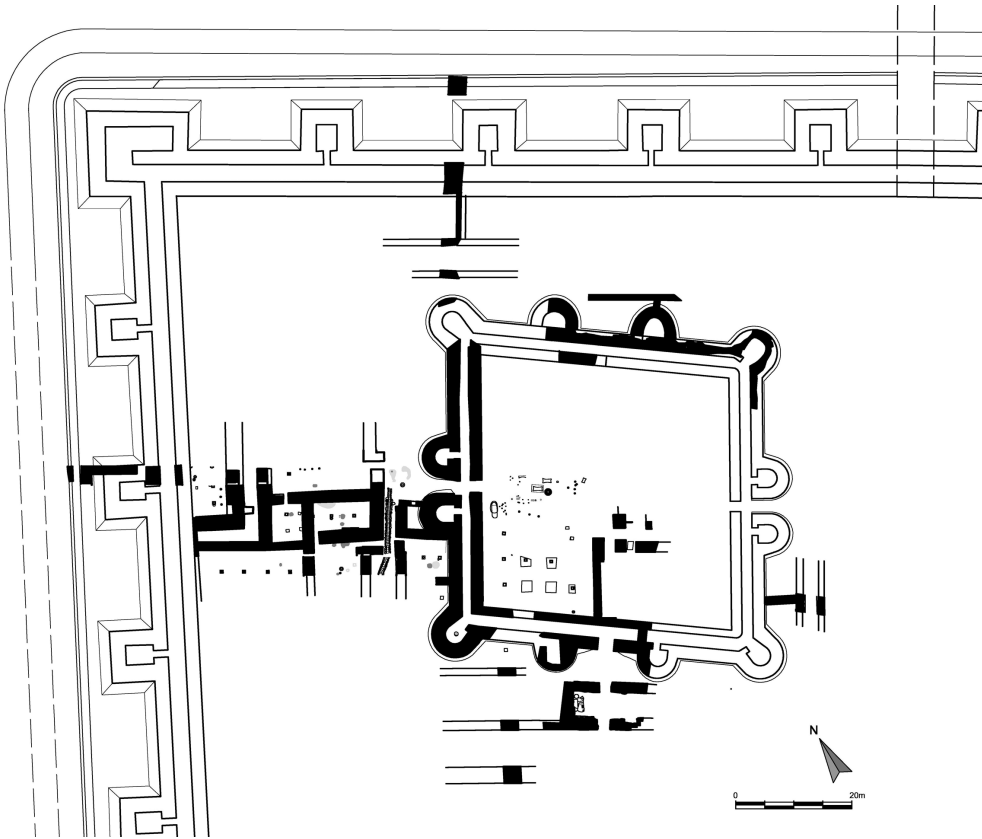
Figure 11.3 Akchakhan-kala Area 10 ceremonial complex, excavation plan. (M. Negus Cleary)

indicate a strong martial influence in the cultural values of the Khorezmian elite.[26] This austere exterior of the building contrasts with the lavishly decorated interiors. The central space has been divided into a columned hall with installations for hearths and other features associated with fire (Figure 11.4). Carved stone column bases in the characteristic Khorezmian three-stepped torus style indicate the size of this hypostyle hall (Figure 11.5). The building complex was clearly created for use by elites based on the high-status finds and the richly furnished spaces. Finds made from luxury imported materials included the fragments of carved ivory furniture legs that have close parallels with royal Achaemenid thrones.[27] There were also gold and bronze sculpted relief mouldings used as architectural decoration.[28] Almost

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[26]   See further discussion in Negus Cleary 2015b: 155.
[27]   Betts et al. 2016; Kidd 2011: 249–54.
[28]   Kidd et al. 2004 (2008): 11–12.
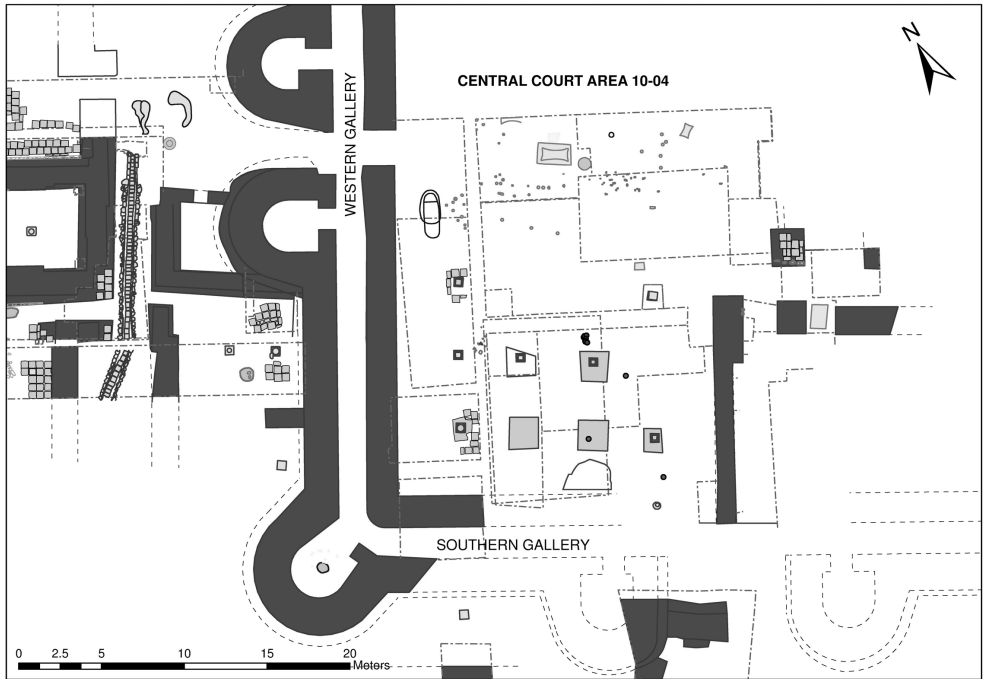
Figure 11.4 Akchakhan-kala Area 10 central court area excavation plan

all wall and ceiling surfaces appear to have been adorned with polychrome figurative and patterned mural artworks. These included a gallery of portraits associated with a painted text that mentions a king; and a procession of animals and humans including horses, camels and large cattle.[29]

In the central court/columned hall several unusual features have been excavated that appear to be associated with ceremonies utilizing fire. These include burnt reeds embedded in the ends of walls or around doorways that appear to have held burning brands to create the effect of a flaming entrance. There were also ox-hide shaped, shallow pits filled with white ashes that have close parallels with nomadic altars from kurgan burials on the Ustiyurt Plateau to the north-west of Khorezm.[30] Many reddened clay patches on the floors indicate areas of burning within the central area. The presence of ceramic drainage tubes through the mud floor into the sand below and large ceramic storage jars set in the floor close to ox-hide shaped altar pits, may have been associated with libations or chthonic rituals,.

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[29] Kidd and Betts 2010: 654.

[30] Kidd 2012; Kidd and Betts 2010: 655; Yagodin et al. 2009: 8. See parallels for the ox-hide shaped pits with steppic nomad fire cult features from the Ustyurt Plateau (Olkhovsky 2000: 42, fig. 9).

Figure 11.5 Excavated south-western quarter of the central court within the AK Area 10 ceremonial complex. The *in situ* carved stone column bases are visible on their mud brick footings. (Photo courtesy of the KAAE, October 2010)

Although the Khorezmian culture was syncretic, incorporating features from diverse cultural traditions such as the Achaemenid, Gandharan and Greco-Bactrian, there were many elements influenced by the northern steppic cultural sphere. Aside from the ox-hide pit altars, there were other associations with steppic elements evident in the material culture of the Area 10 complex. Many of the mud-bricks that the building and fortification walls were constructed of were marked with tribal signs known as *tamgas*.[31] The location of a grand procession mural painting that featured large animals including at least three horses and possibly a camel in a gallery of the central building indicates its importance.[32] Kidd has discussed the steppic and possibly Parthian elements in the portraits depicting what appear to be royal elites in the Area 10 corridor, such as in the spiral torcs and bird head-dresses worn by the depicted figures.[33]

[31] Helms and Yagodin 1997: plate XIII.
[32] Kidd et al. 2004 (2008): 12, fig.7.
[33] Kidd 2011; Kidd and Betts 2010: 660–6; Yagodin et al. 2009: 20

In summary, findings from the Akchakhan-kala Upper Enclosure point to an elite and high-status precinct where flamboyant ceremonies took place on a grand scale. The Area 10 building was itself a fortified enclosure, surrounded by additional walls and corridors and set within the Upper Enclosure, which was in turn further defended by the Lower Enclosure. The monumental gateways into the Upper Enclosure were carefully designed to allow pedestrian traffic only.[34] This suggests a highly private zone for the use of elites and the performance of ceremonies that were not accessible to a general public, but were for a restricted audience.[35]

Empty Enclosures?

The remaining areas of both enclosures do not appear to have been densely built up. The complete coverage of the enclosures by a deep dune field has hampered investigation of the layout of the intra-mural areas. Geophysical surveys were conducted in sample grids within both the Upper and Lower Enclosures using both magnetometry and ground penetrating radar.[36] The results suggest some mud platforms or areas of mud paving within the Upper Enclosure, and possibly an area with several orthogonally planned features that appear to be structures, or possibly ditches. However, the geophysical survey sampling suggests that the interiors of the enclosures were not built up with a high-density of buildings or streets.[37]

Excavated soundings within the enclosures have not identified any housing precincts, monumental architecture or other significant occupation features in the intra-mural areas, aside from the three known monuments. Sub-surface archaeological sampling in the form of small test excavation trenches in areas of the enclosures revealed little but mud pavements or open, unoccupied areas.[38] Artefact and feature surveys have revealed some artefact scatters on the surface of the dunes, but these were small in scale and extent and were composed of very fragmentary material.[39] There

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[34] Betts et al. 2009: 40.

[35] Kidd, Negus Cleary and Baker Brite 2012.

[36] Negus Cleary 2015a: 228–41.

[37] For example, the magnetic responses from the magnetometry survey are not in keeping with a densely occupied settlement site (Negus Cleary 2015a: 226–7, 240). These results do not conclusively demonstrate that there were no densely built-up areas within the enclosures. This is because the entire intra-mural areas of the site could not be surveyed with geophysical methods due to the height of the sand dunes and time constraints.

[38] Negus Cleary 2015a: 192–4.

[39] Negus Cleary 2015a: 256–7, 270–3.

were no indications of significant architectural remains within the Lower Enclosure. Metallurgical slag documented and analysed suggests that iron smithing or smelting was practiced within the Upper Enclosure and that workshops may have been located close to the fortification walls.[40]

Overall, our current knowledge of the layout of the Akchakhan-kala enclosures suggests that the intra-mural areas were largely open space with several monumental structures positioned within the Upper Enclosure. The fortified site was carefully laid out to a pre-designed scheme and did not organically develop over time via a nucleation process. The Akchakhan-kala Upper Enclosure was consciously designed as an elite precinct for the performance of ceremonial activities for a restricted audience. Many of these activities appear to have been focused on the Area 10 complex which has associations with a ruling elite and a place from which political control was exerted. However, evidence of domestic occupation has been very difficult to find within the Akchakhan-kala enclosures, suggesting that these were not used as permanent settlements.[41] Conversely, evidence for settlement has been relatively easy to find outside of the enclosures.

Akchakhan-Kala Extra-Mural Settlement

In the extra-mural zone surrounding the Akchakhan-kala enclosures, archaeological evidence has been found of a widespread, low-density settlement located close to canals. Extensive surveys in the area to the north and east of the Akchakhan-kala enclosures revealed the remains of small buildings, corrals or small enclosures, canals, at least two substantial buildings, vineyards, possible fields, artefact scatters that include food preparation ceramics, and copper and iron production remains (Figs. 11.6 and 11.7).[42] These remains are not well preserved due to the introduction of irrigation agriculture in the last decade. Ground penetrating radar surveys in this area have revealed traces of fields and mud structures.[43] Water supply canals have been identified via remote-sensing analysis of satellite imagery and excavations.[44] There are further large canals to the north of the site, indicating

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[40]   Negus Cleary 2015a: 263–7, Appendix 7. It is also possible that this metallurgical activity occurred after the site was abandoned.

[41]   Domestic occupation evidence in the Khorezmian context has been defined in Negus Cleary 2013: 82–3.

[42]   Negus Cleary 2015a: 273–81, 283–9. See also Helms and Yagodin 1997: 48.

[43]   Negus Cleary 2015a: Appendix 5, 60–5.

[44]   Negus Cleary 2015a: 200–7.

this settlement zone may have extended further north. The majority of these remains are contemporary with the Antique period occupation of the Akchakhan-kala enclosures.[45]

The extra-mural zones of low-density, dispersed settlement, production and agricultural features are loosely organized around a water supply canal (Figure 11.6). This indicates that the sedentary population occupied the unfortified plain near the ancient lake and canals and that the enclosures were reserved for exclusive elite ceremonial, political and other functions such as refuge.

Other Khorezmian Enclosure Sites

Other large Khorezmian enclosure sites exhibit similar characteristics to Akchakhan-kala. These include extensive, pre-planned enclosures defined by substantial mud-brick architecture protecting large areas of open space. Palatial complexes were also found within many larger sites, such as Kalaly-gyr 1 and Kiuzely-gyr (Table 11.2). Several sites were of comparable size, such as Bazar-kala, Kalaly-gyr 1 and Kiuzely-gyr. Enclosures sites were of double square/rectangular plan form like Akchakhan-kala, but also single quadrangular layouts such as Ayaz-kala 3 or Toprak-kala, and some conforming to topography such as the hill-top fortress of Kiuzely-gyr. Many of the large enclosure sites had monumental, palatial buildings within the primary enclosure. The majority of the well-investigated enclosure sites had large areas of open space, for example Kalaly-gyr 1 and Kiuzely-gyr,[46] or very low-density built forms (Table 11.2). In the context of these contemporary sites, it would have been usual for Akchakhan-kala to have dense intra-mural settlement remains.[47]

Episodic and short-term occupation of sites was another characteristic common to almost all Khorezmian enclosure sites. As mentioned above, this was the case at Akchakhan-kala. It was also the case at many other

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[45] There is evidence of Early and Late Antique and Early Medieval (Kushano-Afrighid/Afrighid) ceramics in the some locations (Negus Cleary 2015a: 275–6). Overall the majority of datable material was from the Early and Late Antique periods (Negus Cleary 2015a: 288).

[46] Lavrov 1950: 33; Tolstov 1948a: 80.

[47] The site of Toprak-kala represents an exception with its medium – high density of housing blocks and temples. But its rectangular enclosure, the location of an elaborate and highly ceremonial palatial complex within the northern corner, and a second, sprawling extramural palatial complex, fit the pattern of the other Khorezmian large enclosure sites. This dates to a slightly later period than Akchakhan-kala and may represent a new move towards centralization of settlement in the Khorezmian oasis (Negus Cleary 2013: 89).
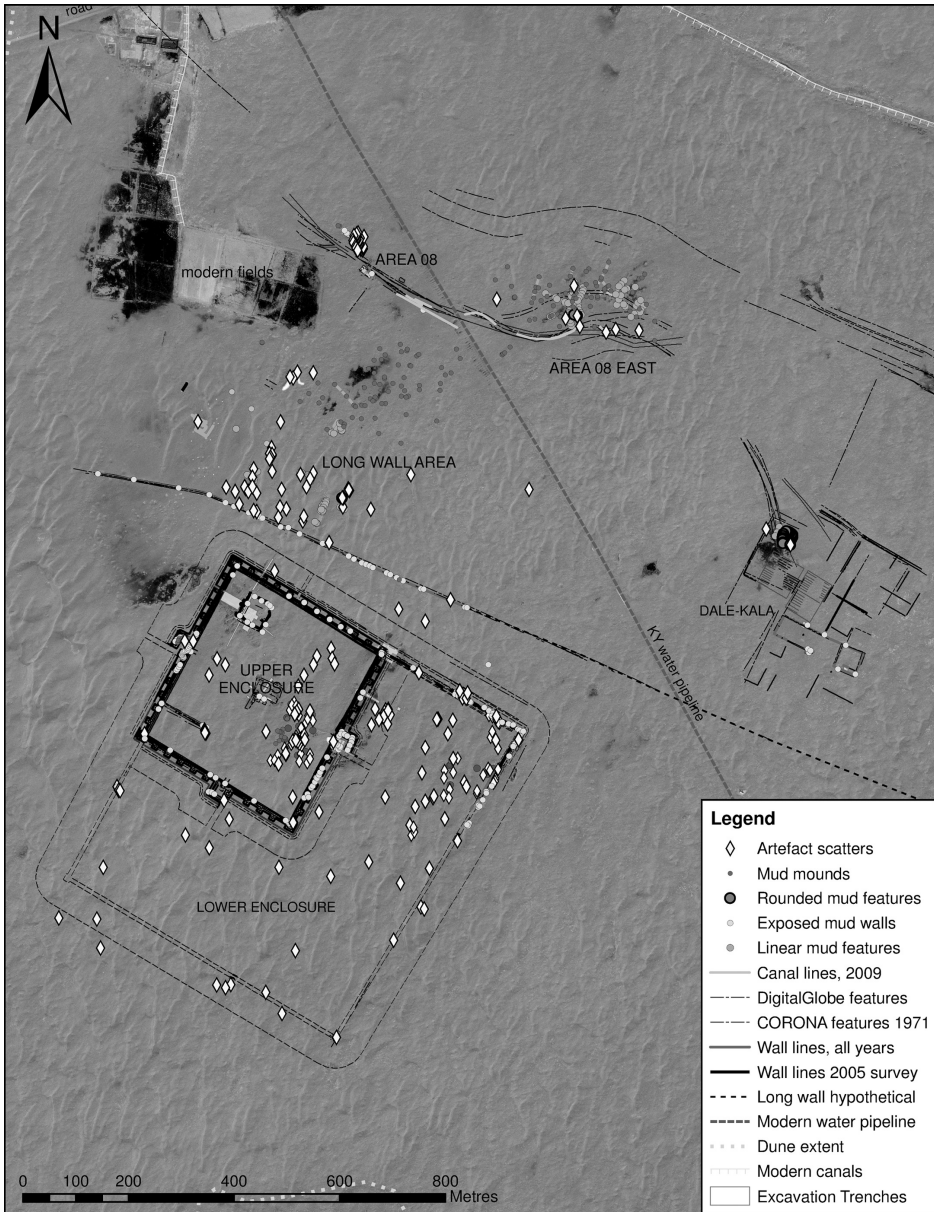
Figure 11.6 Akchakhan-kala extra-mural settlement. Results of ground surveys and remote sensing analyses
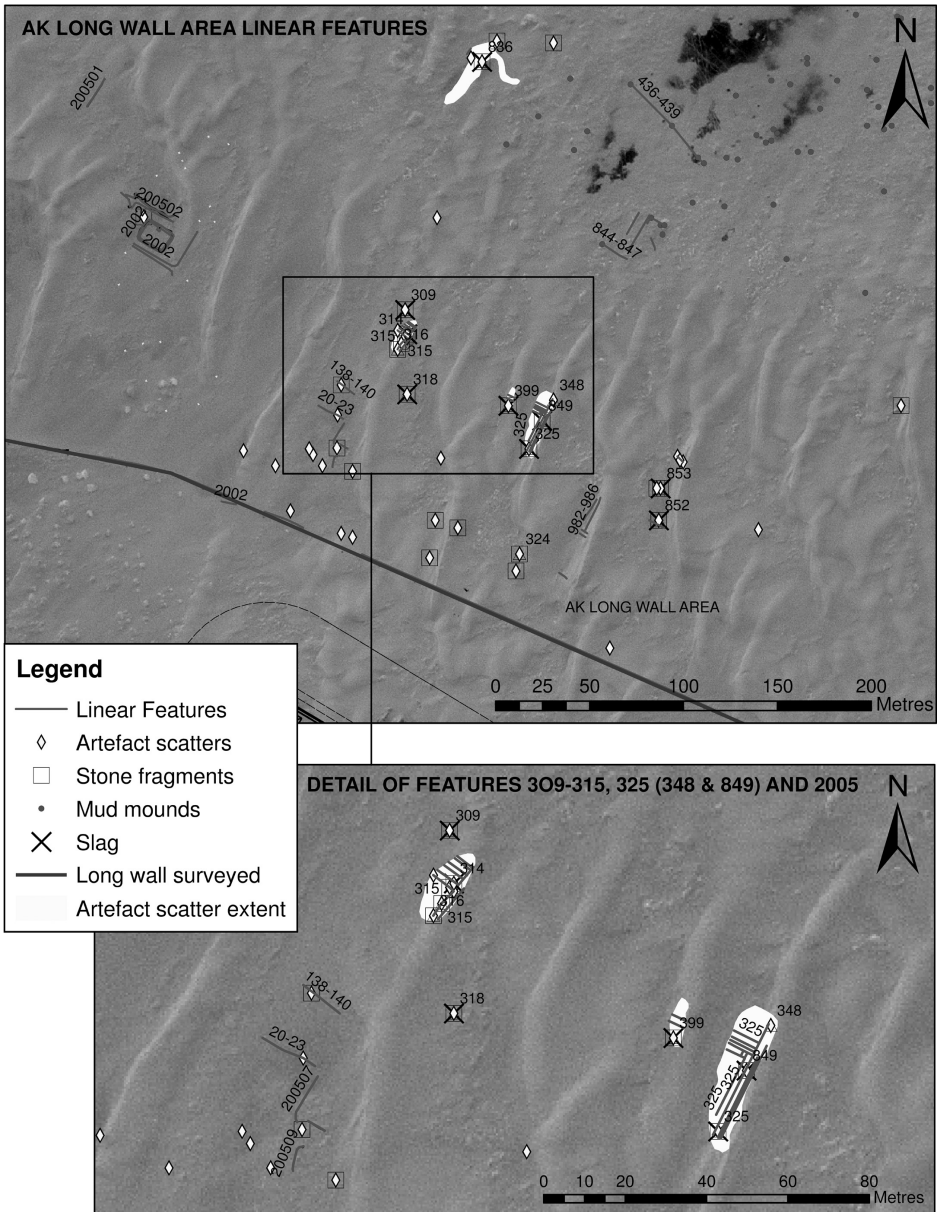
Figure 11.7 Akchakhan-kala extra-mural settlement – details of low-density settlement remains

Table 11.2 Features of a small sample of well-investigated Khorezmian fortified enclosure sites

SITE	Enclosure Area	Chronology and Features	References
Kalaly-gyr 1	63 ha	End of 5th century/early 4th century BCE; 4th–2nd centuries BCE; 2nd–4th century CE. Single, large rectangular enclosure. Empty enclosure – no traces of structures or features Palace complex built against western wall. High status architecture with evidence of a cultic space.	Rapoport and Lapirov-Skoblo 1963: 141–3. Rapoport, Nerazik and Levina 2000: 33.
Kiuzely-gyr	25 ha	6th–5th centuries BCE Double enclosures, irregular in plan (conforming to topography) Palatial complex in the primary enclosure with small ceremonial or cultic tower-like structures. Wattle-and-daub type housing remains built against the walls of the secondary enclosure. Faunal remains included large cattle, horses, camels and sheep and goats. Iron production area and turquoise working. Also seals found – evidence of trade.	Negmatov 1994: 446. Rapoport, Nerazik and Levina 2000: 25–29, figs. Part 1 pl. 3, pl. 4. Tolstov 1948a:77–81; 1960: 12; 1962: 104.
Bazar-kala	23.5 ha	4th–1st century BCE. Double enclosures, square plan.	Andrianov 1969: fig. 4; Lavrov 1950: 19–20; Tolstov 1948a: fig. 48;

Table 11.2. (*cont.*)

SITE	Enclosure Area	Chronology and Features	References
		Two monumental buildings. No known domestic structures or contexts. Post-abandonment pottery kilns.	Tolstov 1962: fig. 41.
Ayaz-kala 3	4.5 ha	4th/3rd century BCE; 1st–2nd century CE. Single parallelogram-shaped enclosure. Palace building against northern wall. The rest of the enclosure was devoid of structures or features – open space.	Bolelov 1998. Nerazik 1976.
Kalaly-gyr 2	3.0 ha	Mid. 4th –beginning 2nd centuries BCE. Several monumental buildings including the 'round temple', and central monumental building. Metal production. Wattle-and-daub pit-type dwellings in one area.	Vainberg 1994: 75, 77. Vaynberg 2004: 12, 17, 19

Khorezmian enclosure sites, including Ayaz-kala 3, Kurgashin-kala and Kalaly-gyr 1.[48] This evidence for intermittent occupations is suggestive of mobile lifestyles, where places were inhabited seasonally or annually. Alternatively, these sites may have been occupied only when required for several months or years, then left again.

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[48] For example, the Ayaz-kala 3 enclosure and farmsteads had several short periods of occupation (Bolelov 1998: 134; Nerazik 1976: 36–48); the Dzhanbas-kala open settlement (Nerazik 1976: 36); Bol'shoi Kyrk-kyz-kala had several periods of occupation, destruction, abandonment and rebuilding (Khozhaniyazov 2006: 47, n.142). See discussion in Negus Cleary 2015a: 191–2, 340–1, 345–6; 2015b: 156–7.

Another characteristic common to Akchakhan-kala and other Khorezmian sites from the Antique periods are the low-density, unfortified settlement zones documented around the enclosure sites. The settlement evidence from Khorezm is for dispersed and de-centralized farmsteads with associated fields, vineyards, orchards and corrals located along water management features such as supply canals or watercourses. These are found in broad zones surrounding many of the fortified enclosure sites. Examples include the 80ha Ayaz-kala complex with a very low density of 0.2 dwellings per hectare. This complex has several intermittent occupation periods, but the Antique settlement occupations were from the fourth–third century BCE; then first–second century CE.[49] Another location that was well preserved and well-documented by Nerazik was Kurgashin-kala with its small fortified enclosure and extra-mural vineyard and farmstead complex (Figure 11.8). These extra-mural farmsteads were occupied in the fourth–third centuries BCE and during this time the fortified enclosure was in use but its interior was not built-up.[50] There is some evidence for the corralling of animals within the enclosure.[51] This suggests that at least some of the enclosures were used for animal herding activities, as well as refuge, whilst the extra-mural settlement was involved in viticulture and probably other subsistence food production. The dwellings here were very few in number (four to five) and indicate a very small permanent population, if indeed the houses were occupied all year round. Nerazik interpreted the Kurgashin-kala farmsteads as summer residences associated with wine-making.[52] The density of the Kurgashin-kala settlement was also low, with c. nine dwellings in 35 ha, giving 0.26 dwellings/ha.

Khorezmian Settlement Patterns

Overall, the settlement pattern of the Khorezmian oasis during the fourth century BCE–fourth century CE was de-centralized, very low in density, with a small permanent population. The settled landscape can be characterized as linear zones of agro-pastoral settlement along several major canals extending out through the delta. In between these zones were arid, forested or marshy areas. There was a general pattern of short-term episodic

[49] Nerazik 1976: 37.
[50] Kolyakov 1991: 121; Nerazik 1976: 37.
[51] Kolyakov 1991: 120–3.
[52] Nerazik 1976: 36.
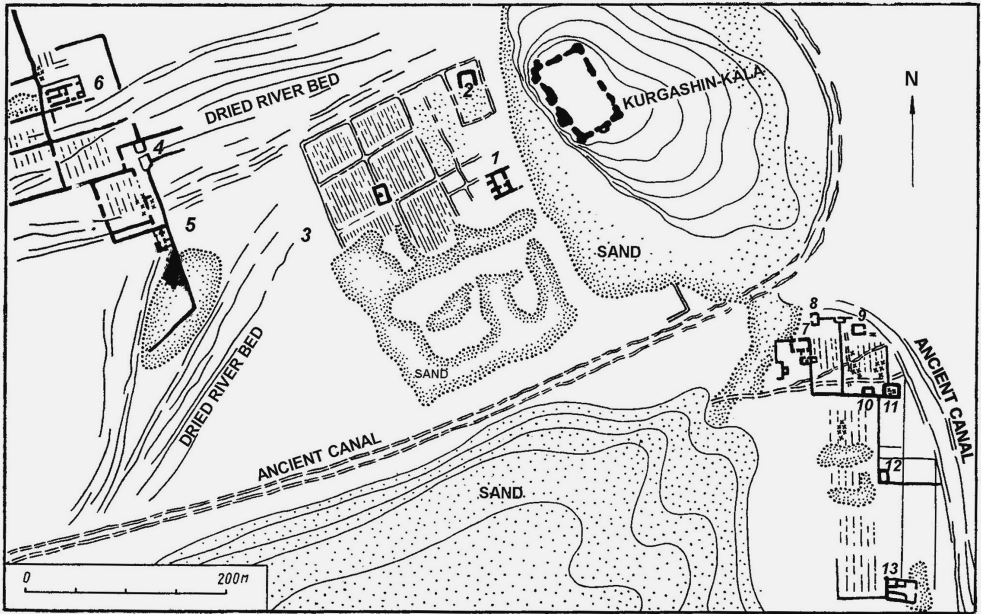
Figure 11.8 Kurgashin-kala settlement. English labels by M. Negus Cleary. (Nerazik 1976: fig.15)

occupation with frequent abandonments and re-occupations of all site and feature types identified in the delta, including fortified sites.[53]

The settlement remains represent a fairly small settled population that would have been insufficient to construct and maintain the hydrological system and the large fortified sites.[54] This suggests that a significant proportion of the population were mobile, engaged in pastoralism and lived in more ephemeral housing, such as tents. The very dispersed nature of the settlements and the large distances between the locations of fortified sites, pottery production facilities and mortuary sites suggests that the local populations had a high degree of mobility or the capacity to travel quickly and easily to different locations around the delta, and did not need to nucleate activities, resources and institutions. Travel may have been via horse, camel, wagon or perhaps even small boats on the main canals. The desert/delta boundary seems to have been a preferred zone for settlement and production,

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[53] Negus Cleary 2015a: 340–1, 2015b: 156–7.

[54] Andrianov 1969: 127, 133. See also a similar conclusion drawn by Stride (2004: 187, 188, 191) in his analysis of the Surkhan Darya valley in northern Bactria pre-Achaemenid and Achaemenid times where the permanent habitation remains were insufficient to represent the size of population required to build and maintain the fortified site of Kyzyk-tepe and the canal system. He concluded that the local population must have employed a mixed strategy of irrigated and dry farming and pastoralism.

perhaps to take advantage of both the desert steppe for the grazing of herds, and the alluvial deposits of the delta for agriculture and viticulture.

These circumstances suggest that the local population was engaged in multiple resource subsistence strategies that included agriculture, wine making, and horse and camel as well as sheep and goat herding. Hunting and fishing may also have been practised.[55] The example of the Ayaz-kala complex suggests a mixed agro-pastoral economy during both occupation episodes in the Early and Late Antique periods. Baker Brite's recent investigation of domestic practices at Kara-tepe 1 demonstrated that the inhabitants also used multiple resource strategies in order to adapt to extreme environmental changes during the end of the Late Antique and Afrighid periods.[56]

Fortified enclosures and fortified manorial-style buildings formed nodes within the settlement zones. It is likely that the medium-sized fortified enclosure sites from the Early Antique periods played a role in pastoral practices and mercantile activities and also functioned as refuges for local populations. The larger enclosures in particular were locations of political power and elite residences. However, they do not represent a nucleation or centralization of settlement or services. Overall, the settlement process associated with the appearance of fortified enclosure sites in eastern Khorezm during the Archaic and Early Antique periods was not a process of urbanization because it lacked a 'centre-oriented ethos'.[57] In their analysis of the Middle Bronze Age Eurasian Sintashta steppe settlements, Johnson and Hanks make clear that urbanization is the physical movement of people to a growing centre that results in the nucleation of habitation, production and socio-political activities and entities.[58] Khorezmian habitation was at least partially sedentary, but there was no clear centralization of settlement or other activities.

The lack of nucleation also extended to craft production and other activities. Material remains of pottery and metallurgical production were dispersed in various places in isolated locations close to a water source;[59] in abandoned or occupied fortified enclosure sites;[60] and in domestic contexts

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[55] See the results of faunal analyses from Akchakhan-kala Area 03 (Baker Brite 2007: 19, 21, 23) and from the excavation of a small house from the 'Kushan'-Afrighid period at Kara-tepe 1 (Baker Brite 2011: 311, 320) which document the presence of fish bones and indicate that fishing was employed in eastern Khorezm in Late Antiquity. Unfortunately, detailed faunal or archaeobotanical studies have been limited for ancient Khorezm – see comments by Baker Brite 2011: 122

[56] Baker Brite 2011.

[57] Johnson and Hanks 2012: 358.

[58] Johnson and Hanks 2012: 357.

[59] For example, the Ayaz-kala, Dzhanbas-kala and Burly-kala pottery kilns (Nerazik 1976: 16, 24, 39, 41).

[60] For example, the pottery kilns within Bazar-kala (Vororb'eva 1959a: 206, 209, 210) and Kalaly-gyr 1 (Tolstov 1958: 164–5); the iron smelting workshop within Kiuzely-gyr (Tolstov 1962: 99),

associated with dwellings.[61] Mortuary sites were found as isolated ossuary necropolei, kurgan burial mound complexes and places of exposure of the dead for excarnation (*dakhmas*), often on higher ground or located within abandoned fortified sites.[62] The so-called 'fire-temple' or ceremonial complex of Tash-kyrman-tepe indicates that some ritual activities were also de-centralized. However, many of the large enclosure sites included ceremonial or ritual spaces within the monumental buildings set in their primary enclosures. This dispersal of production, mortuary and ceremonial or religious activities to various locations around the oasis indicates that the local population had a high degree of mobility.

Fletcher's analysis of historical settlement trends across the globe identified that settlement remains of mobile and semi-mobile communities are characterized by sites ranging between 1 ha to 100 ha in area. These communities can only operate at relatively low densities and in dispersed patterns because of their employment of multiple-resource subsistence strategies that include pastoralism. Unbuilt areas were prevalent within these settlements and these spaces were venues for a variety of services and activities that may not be easily detected using conventional archaeological techniques.[63] These observations of site size range, density and the areas of open space fit the Khorezmian settlement evidence and also that of other areas of Ancient and Early Medieval Eurasia, including those with fortified centres similar to the Khorezmian *kalas*.

Mobile or Agro-Pastoral Eurasian Settlement Adaptation

Comparison of the Khorezmian settlement pattern with other settlement systems from the Ancient and Early Medieval periods in Inner Eurasia revealed that there were strong synergies between the Khorezmian archaeological landscape and that of Achaemenid Iran, the Central Asian oases,

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and possibly also the metallurgical remains from Akchakhan-kala (Negus Cleary 2015a: 263–7). See discussion in Negus Cleary 2015b: 156–7.

[61] For example, the turquoise workshop at Dingil'dzhe (Vororb'eva 1959b: 74, 80); the metallurgical production remains from Akchakhan-kala extra-mural settlement (Negus Cleary 2015a: 263–7).

[62] For example, the Toprak-kala north kurgans (Manylov 1975: 81–3), Burly-kala ossuary necropolis (Rapoport 1971: 68–70), the *dakhma* of Chil'pyk in the north (Tolstov 1948a: 71, 72); and the ossuary burials within the fortified enclosures of Kalaly-gyr 1 (Rapoport and Lapirov-Skoblo 1963: 143; Tolstov 1958: 161), Kalaly-gyr 2 (Vaynberg 2004: 4), Kanga-kala 1 (Tolstov 1958: 72) and Butentau-kala 2 (Bizhanov and Khozhaniyazov 2003: 39).

[63] Fletcher 1986: 71, 73.

and the Eurasian steppe. The comparative analysis conducted for my PhD research demonstrated that non-nucleated, low-density, dispersed settlement patterns were found in a variety of areas in ancient Eurasia and were associated with societies employing agro-pastoral and multiple resource subsistence strategies.[64] Comparable examples of settlements enclosure sites from the Mongolian and Kazakh steppe, the Central Asian desert-steppe and oases, and the Iranian plateau are discussed below. These indicate that low-density, non-nucleated settlement systems associated with enclosure sites form a distinctive settlement adaptation employed by mobile, agro-pastoral societies and emerging states in the steppe, desert and oasis zones of Eurasia.

There are several consistencies in Eurasian agro-pastoral settlement adaptation across different geographical contexts. Enclosure sites formed key gathering points in the landscape, often associated with ruling elites. Habitation sites were located along river channels or canals. Settlements were low in density, unfortified and extensive but accommodated small, settled populations. Production sites were found in a variety of contexts, as isolated, single-function sites, and also in association with habitation and fortified sites. Mortuary and ceremonial sites were most often found dispersed in varied locations around the settled landscape.

The de-centralized, low-density and dispersed nature of these settled landscapes together with episodic occupations indicates that they were inhabited by mobile populations. Hiebert described this type of settlement pattern as typical of the pre-modern oases of Central Asia.[65] However, evidence from Iran, Kazakhstan and Mongolia suggest that it was more widespread and may be a characteristic of Eurasian agro-pastoral mobile societies more generally.

Syr-Darya Delta

The Chirik-rabat culture of the fifth/fourth–third/second centuries BCE was contemporary with Antique period Khorezm and situated relatively close to it in the Syr-darya delta, east of the Aral Sea. It was also characterized by fortified sites and open settlements associated with river channels.[66] The inhabitants employed a mixed pastoral and agricultural economy.

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[64]   Negus Cleary 2015a: 399–441.
[65]   Hiebert 1992: 111.
[66]   Negmatov 1994: 449–50; Rapoport, Nerazik and Levina 2000: 129–30; Tolstov 1948b.

These sites have been identified with the Scythians/Saka.[67] More than 200 unfortified settlements were documented; other features included branched irrigation systems, six fortified enclosure sites, and monumental mortuary features including kurgans and mausolea. The open settlements were comprised of individual, multi-roomed homesteads/farmsteads surrounded by gardens, vegetable plots and fields,[68] very similar to those found in Khorezm. Two well-investigated sites are Chirik-rabat (Figure 11.9 (c)) and Babish-mulla 1. These were not fortified settlements, but were fortified enclosures with sophisticated architectural monuments, multiple enclosures, kurgans and other mortuary monuments within them as well as large areas of open ground.[69] This suggests that the Chirik-rabat culture fortified sites were associated with specialized activities: mortuary, ceremonial or commemorative and probably elite occupation.

Central Asian Enclosure Sites

Vogelsang identified a similar phenomenon of large fortified enclosure sites with citadels or monumental building complexes but few other structures from the sixth–fourth centuries BCE (the Achaemenid period) across western Central Asia. In Sogdia during this period, the major site of Afrasiab was enclosed by a huge walled area of over 219 ha, but questions remain as to whether this space was completely built up during this pre-Hellenistic period. Vogelsang suggested that the fortifications of Afrasiab were 'primarily meant to protect, not so much an urban centre, as a group of people and their beasts'[70] – an interpretation echoed by Zadneprovsky.[71]

The layout of Old Kandahar in Arachosia during the pre-Hellenistic period had a similar lack of habitation buildings in a large proportion of the site, which Vogelsang suggested may have been to lodge an itinerant pastoral population and their cattle.[72] The fortification walls built atop a natural elevation had a line of rooms built against the interior, similar to those found in Khorezmian Burly-kala 1 and Gyaur-kala Sultan-uiz-dag.[73]

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[67] Rapoport, Nerazik and Levina 2000: 129; Tolstov 1962: 136–9.
[68] Rapoport, Nerazik and Levina 2000: 130.
[69] Rapoport, Nerazik and Levina 2000: 130–42; Tolstov 1962: 136–70, figs.72–95.
[70] Vogelsang 1992: 289.
[71] Zadneprovsky 1995: 158.
[72] Vogelsang 1992: 257. S. Helms, personal communication, August 2002.
[73] Manylov and Khozhaniyazov 1981; Rapoport and Trudnovskaya 1958.
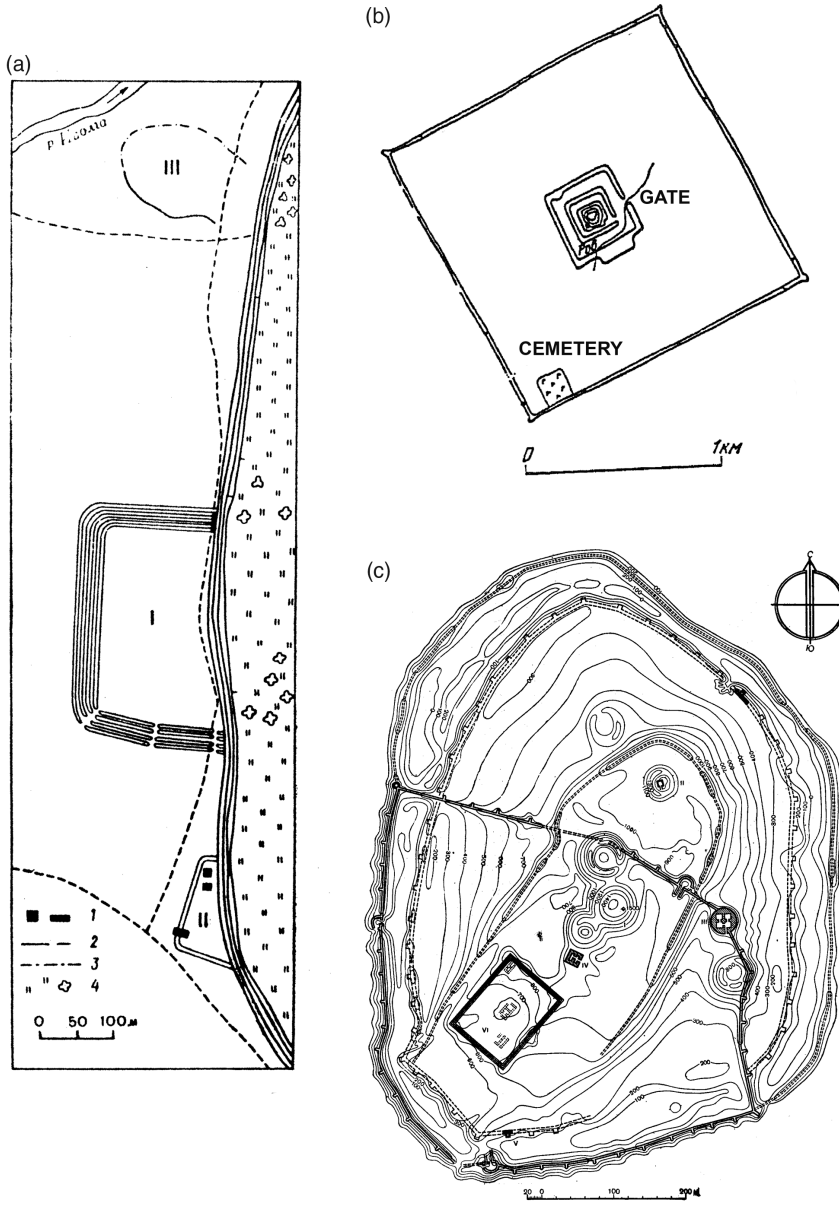
Figure 11.9 (a) – Ivolga complex (Davydova 1985: fig.1) (b) – Plan of Kala-i Zakoki Maron (Koshelenko 1985: tabl.CXXIV) (c) – Plan of Chirik-rabat enclosure site (Tolstov 1962: fig.74)

Vogelsang's idea was that these large fortified sites in Central Asia had their origins in nomadic campsites, and used the Archaic period Khorezmian site of Kiuzely-gyr as an example of a layout strongly reminiscent of a fortified campsite.[74] Tolstov originally interpreted the double walls of Khorezmian enclosures as spaces used for habitation, or 'lived-in walls', based on the occupation deposits present within the triple-corridors of the fortification walls of Kiuzely-gyr.[75] There may have been a cultural 'habit' of sheltering within or against the walls of fortified enclosures and leaving the central space for cattle or other activities.

The site of Kala-i Zakhoki Maron in Sogdia provides an intriguing example of what may be a fortified capital built by a nomadic ruling class within the oasis zone. It is an extremely formal structure with a central square citadel and three concentric square enclosures covering approximately 225ha (Figure 11.9 (b)). It was founded in the second–first centuries BCE, and so is contemporary with the Khorezmian sites.[76] There were no structures built within the enclosures, apart from the tower-like citadel in the centre.

Abdoullaev interpreted this site as evidence that ancient nomadic states constructed vast, elaborate, well-fortified and well laid-out sites like Kala-i Zakhoki Maron that functioned as tent settlements or capitals. These sites were nodal points providing infrastructure and protection for the tent-city of a nomad ruling elite, similar to that of the Mongols in the medieval period, and the Timurid court of the fifteenth century CE.[77] The evidence from this exceptional site suggests that powerful nomadic groups did construct, or at least use, formalized architectural complexes that at first glance appear to have been walled cities or citadels.

Rapin and Abdoullaev have proposed that the elites responsible for Kala-i Zakhoki Maron may have been the Kangju who established a new system of 'nomad capitals' including Afrasiab (Samarkand) and various other fortified sites, such as Kala-i Zakhoki Maron.[78] The Chinese annals describe the typical nomadic lifestyle of the Kangju elite, in particular the ruler who wintered in their capital of Pi-t'ien and summered in the steppe.[79]

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[74] Vogelsang 1992: 291.
[75] Tolstov 1962: 99. However, this idea was later discredited (Helms notes in Khozhaniyazov 2006: 21, n.45).
[76] Abdoullaev 2001: 206; Suleimanov 2000: 26–8.
[77] Andrews 1978.
[78] Abdoullaev 2001; Rapin 2007: 53.
[79] Zadneprovskiy 1994: 464. See also comments by Kim (2013: 42) on the seasonal sedentary practices of the Kangju elite and the agro-pastoral nature of societies under the Kangju.

Xiongnu

The Xiongnu (Hsiung-nu) fortified sites located within the Mongolian steppe exemplify a settlement pattern associated with a clearly identified nomadic state.[80] This pattern consisted of fortified enclosures, un-walled habitation sites or occupation areas (e.g. seasonal campsites),[81] burial sites, ceremonial/mortuary monuments (*kirigsuurs*) and stone stelae spread along river valleys as evidence of a diverse agro-pastoral economy with seasonal tethering to specific locations.[82] These sites date from the late third century BCE–mid-first century CE.

The Xiongnu settlement of Ivolga revealed evidence of agricultural production in conjunction with a fortified enclosure site and large cemetery. The site complex featured a 7 ha earthen enclosure surrounded by multiple ditches, and a second smaller enclosure, both built at the edge of a steep river terrace (Figure 11.9 (a)). There were fifty-one dwellings found, mostly pit houses.[83] Evidence of diverse craft production was found at Ivolga with pottery making, bone carving and bronze and iron working.[84] The results from Ivolga showed that this steppic state did not rely exclusively on pastoralism but employed multiple-resource subsistence strategies.[85]

Xiongnu fortified sites were located on river terraces, such as Ivolga which was at the confluence of rivers.[86] Fortified sites were mostly ditched enclosures, several hectares in area.[87] The site of Kholtost Khurem (EGS 131) documented by Wright and colleagues shows no evidence of having been used as a settlement site or a fortified refuge despite its excellent vantage point. Rather, it has been interpreted as a central place for periodic events or gatherings.[88]

Habitation sites or seasonal campsites were not in centralized locations, nor close to resources, but at the entry/exit points to the Egiin Gol river valley and therefore were related to lines of mobility for potential interaction with external regions.[89] In other areas, habitation/occupation areas were

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[80] Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2006: 192–3.

[81] See discussion on the definition of Xiongnu habitation sites in Houle and Broderick 2011: 141.

[82] Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2007: 52–3; Houle and Broderick 2011: 141–4; Wright, Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2009: 374–5.

[83] Davydova 1985: 10–22; Wright, Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2009: 375.

[84] An iron smelting furnace and workshop was found within the walled enclosure (Houle and Broderick 2011: 138).

[85] Davydova 1985; Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2007: 46–8.

[86] Wright, Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2009: 375.

[87] Wright, Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2009: 375, 381–2.

[88] Wright, Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2009: 381–2, fig.7.

[89] Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2006: 194, 198, fig.5.

located along river beds and foothills and are assumed to represent summer and winter occupations.[90] Remains of slag, charcoal and crucibles have been documented in dispersed campsites and cemeteries which indicates that the Xiongnu metal production was de-centralized, widely practised and of small-scale.[91] However, a metal smelting furnace was found within the walled enclosure of Ivolga, which has similarities with the Khorezmian evidence discussed above and suggests that metal production was also controlled by elites.

Early Medieval Mongolian States

Early Medieval and Medieval period Uighur, Kitan and Mongol empires also built enclosure sites within the Mongolian steppe, such as the Uighur sites of Baibalyk,[92] the Kitan site of Khar Bukhyn Balgas,[93] and the famous Kharkhorum of the Mongol empire.[94] These sites were more clearly monumentalized and fortified than the earlier Xiongnu enclosures, but appear to follow a similar tradition of nodal places. They were also rectangular in plan, often with multiple rectilinear inner enclosures and were constructed of rammed earth. Although they contained permanent structures for administrative purposes, craft production and trade, there were large areas of open space within the ramparts for itinerant tent housing-quarters.[95] They served key mercantile, military and administrative functions and were the itinerant capitals for the head of state and his court.[96]

Enclosure Sites as Political Capitals

The Mongolian fortified sites of the Xiongnu, Kitan and Uighur states discussed above and the large, high status enclosures of ancient Khorezm, functioned as regal-ceremonial capitals. The political system of the Xiongnu was sophisticated and centralized and had the capability of controlling vast territories.[97] When the ruling court was in residence, these sites drew people from

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[90] Houle and Broderick 2011; Wright, Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2009.
[91] Houle and Broderick 2011: 138, 150.
[92] Plümer and Roth 2002; Rogers, Ulambayar and Gallon 2005.
[93] Jagchin 1981; Rogers, Ulambayar and Gallon 2005.
[94] Rogers, Ulambayar and Gallon 2005.
[95] Rogers, Ulambayar and Gallon 2005: 803–12.
[96] Rogers, Ulambayar and Gallon 2005: 802.
[97] Kim 2013: 22–3.

across the landscape. Honeychurch and Amartuvshin called them 'impressive points of tether'.[98] Rogers and colleagues consider these sites were 'steppe urban centres', based primarily on their provision of specialized functions to a broader region.[99]

Honeychurch and Amatuvshin conceptualized the political 'centre' and its ruling elites as being highly mobile themselves, circulating around the landscape – it therefore should not be imagined as a point on the landscape but as a line or polygon extending over the terrain, 'bringing to bear administrative oversight across a broad swath of landscape, both through its presence and the possibility of its presence'.[100] This political structure allowed for control and integration of diverse communities over extensive territories and has been used by many other states, including the Achaemenids.

The Achaemenid royal court moved from capital to capital and also smaller habitation areas, whilst the political and administrative power base moved with the king.[101] Recent work by Boucharlat and his colleagues has demonstrated that the settlement organization of the plains around the royal Achaemenid centres of Persepolis, Susa and Pasargadae have similarities with the non-nucleated settlement pattern found in Khorezm and other Central Asian regions.[102] Boucharlat and colleagues characterize the settlement pattern of the Persepolis plain not as a dense occupation zone, but as a low-density, dispersed spread of buildings and sites integrated into a wider cultural landscape of roads, quarries and production locales irrigated by a large-scale hydrological system.[103]

The imperial centres of Persepolis and Susa and possibly also Pasargadae,[104] were not sites created out of an organic nucleation of population. They were also fortified sites,[105] and as with the Khorezmian fortified enclosures, they were new foundations, pre-planned and carefully formalized as statements displaying the wealth and power of the Achaemenid Empire and its kings. They were not settlements or cities in themselves, but rather political and

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[98] Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2007: 55.

[99] Rogers, Ulambayar and Gallon 2005: 802.

[100] Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2007: 55.

[101] Boucharlat 1997: 219. See also anthropological examples of this type of de-centralized political organization within Eurasian steppe nomadic societies in Khazanov (1984: 149, 168–9, 175).

[102] Boucharlat 2002; Boucharlat 2003: 264; Boucharlat, De Schacht and Gondet 2012; Sumner 1986.

[103] Boucharlat, De Schacht and Gondet 2012: 281–2.

[104] Boucharlat 2002; Boucharlat, De Schacht and Gondet 2012: 281.

[105] Mousavi makes clear the fortified nature of the Persepolis terrace and that the defensive enclosure was part of first construction phases at the site, along with the Apadana and Treasury c. 516-512 BCE. (Mousavi 1992: 206).

administrative facilities in a dispersed, de-centralized settlement system. Essentially these sites consisted of building complexes related to the itinerant royal court and administration and were not continuously occupied.[106] It could be argued that the royal Achaemenid residences are the imperial equivalent of the largest fortified enclosure sites in the Central Asian and Khorezmian settlement systems – impressive, monumentalized stage sets for aristocratic occupation, administration and events.

A. Rapoport identified two types of capital cities or centres: the more common one was compact, where the central enclave of the capital formed part of a nucleated settlement; the second type was dispersed with a monumental enclave that stood alone and any settlement was very low in density and spread out extensively around it.[107] The first type is our 'typical' city as a permanent nucleated settlement. The large Eurasian enclosure sites fall into the second type. Rapoport stressed the symbolic nature and ceremonial function of pre-modern capitals and that ceremonial centres or sacred enclaves were first and foremost political in function and were crucial in organizing territory of semi-nomadic groups and empires.[108] In this sense, the term 'capital' is highly relevant and I suggest that the terms 'regal capital' or 'nomad capital' could be used to describe the large fortified enclosure of Khorezm and other areas of Inner Eurasia as alternative forms of urbanism.

There are strong similarities in function, size, monumentality and predetermined purposive design exhibited by the Achaemenid capitals of Persepolis and Susa, the Khorezmian sites of Akchakhan-kala and Kalaly-gyr 1, large Xiongnu enclosures such as Ivolga, the Uighur and Kitan enclosures and the Kangju sites in Sogdia like Kala-i Zakhoki Maron. These were used primarily as formalized facilities for an itinerant, ruling elite – Vogelsang's formalized campsites and Boucharlat's royal camps. The impermanency and mobility of the populations that itinerantly occupied these sites is important, but it does not nullify the status of these sites as key installations in the socio-political landscape.

Conclusion

The evidence discussed in this chapter has established that the Khorezmian Late Iron Age/Antique fortified enclosures were part of a wider settlement pattern in Eurasia associated with agro-pastoral and mobile societies.

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[106] Boucharlat 1997: 218.
[107] Rapoport 1993: 39, fig.2
[108] Rapoport 1993: 45–9.

Permanent and seasonal habitations were found in very low-density, wide-spread zones close to water sources or canals, and were occupied by only a small proportion of the ancient population. Fortified enclosures were specialized sites within this settlement adaptation. Although they varied in form and size, they appear to have had similar practical, social and symbolic functions related to defence/refuge, elite/regal residence and administration, ceremony and accommodation of pastoral groups and their livestock. Importantly, there was no evidence of large, nucleated, permanent population centres in this pattern. This may have been based on the need to accommodate a population that relied heavily on both agriculture and pastoralism and the need to be highly adaptable and mobile.

The large enclosure sites of Eurasian mobile states were elaborate and defendable facilities from which the elite could administer their territories and be seen in ritualistic ceremonies designed to impress their subjects and foreign visitors. In effect, these sites were constructed to legitimize the power of the ruling elite. They symbolized the wealth, prestige and power of the state and its ruler via monumental and over-scaled architecture, impressive artistic repertoire and elaborate public ceremonies to establish and perpetuate hierarchical social roles. These sites were integral parts of a political system wherein political power was not spatially centralized in a city, but the political 'heart' of the state resided in the ruler. The royal court was itinerant in order to control a mobile population. These regal centres or nomad capitals formed nodal points in which the symbolic might of the ruler could be communicated. The recent results of archaeological investigations at the Khorezmian site of Akchakhan-kala illustrate this type of regal capital site with its monumental architectural complexes, artworks and luxury goods.

The large enclosure sites in Khorezm and throughout Inner Eurasia, illustrate the great variability of human habitations and alternative settlement models. The evidence analysed in this chapter contributes to a broader trend in Eurasian scholarship addressing settlement adaptations that are not easily classifiable into categories like 'settled' and 'nomadic', 'urban' or 'rural' or 'pastoral'[109] – they are of both worlds and yet of neither. Agro-pastoral settlement systems represent an apparent composite or intermediary position between the settled and the nomadic, the steppe and the sown, that appears to have been widespread across Eurasia from the Bronze Age until the Hellenistic period, and was still present in some societies, such as those of the Kerders, Turkmen and Karakalpaks, until the Soviet period

[109]   For example, Abdoullaev 2001; Baker Brite 2011; Chang 2008; 2012; Chang et al. 2003; Johnson and Hanks 2012; Honeychurch and Amartuvshin 2006; 2007; Houle and Broderick 2011; Kohl 2007; Rapin 2007; Stride, Rondelli and Mantellini 2009; Vogelsang 1992.

with its policy of forced sedentarization. This more inclusive view allows for an interpretation of fortified enclosure sites as products of mobile agro-pastoral societies, rather than assuming them to have been created by sedentary centralized states.

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Conclusion

HYUN JIN KIM, FREDERIK JULIAAN VERVAET
AND SELIM FERRUH ADALI

This book made a bold attempt to research comprehensibly the history, philology and archaeology of Ancient and Early Medieval Eurasian Empires from comparative and interdisciplinary perspectives. Four aspects were singled out for analysis in this volume: political organization; socio-institutional aspects; cultural legacies; and archaeological insights. The results of this endeavour will be summarized here.

As outlined in the introduction, the book focused on the above key aspects of three imperial traditions (though not exclusively): the imperial traditions of China, the ancient Greco-Roman world and Inner Asia. By combining the latest research on Inner Asia, which constituted the geographical pivot of Eurasia in Antiquity and, even more so, during the Middle Ages, with comparative research on Greece-Rome and China the volume has highlighted the points of contact, interactions and mutual influence between the various sub-regions of Eurasia. Rather than compartmentalizing the histories of the various empires under consideration (Rome, Han China, Xiongnu etc.) the book has treated them as a Eurasian totality and as a result identified the pan-Eurasian geopolitical networks which facilitated the exchange of political and cultural ideas that revolutionized both the Ancient world and the succeeding geopolitical landscape of the Early Middle Ages.

The expansion of steppe peoples from Inner Eurasia into the peripheral regions of Eurasia has been a constant theme running through the entire volume. The book has demonstrated clearly the crucial role played by Inner Asian empires and migrants in the development of other Eurasian empires based in the Mediterranean (Rome), Western Europe (the Franks), the Middle East (Assyria and Persia), China (Tang dynasty) and India (the Kushans, Sakas etc.). This was an ongoing phenomenon of global implications and a single volume can surely not do justice to such an immense topic. We therefore sincerely hope that this research will be a stepping-stone to further research on this crucial, but as yet under-appreciated aspect of world history.

In the first section of the book three chapters discussed consecutively the impact of Inner Asian expansion and migration on the political destinies of empires in three sub-regions of Eurasia. Hyun Jin Kim's chapter highlighted the immense geopolitical significance of Hunnic expansion across Eurasia in Late Antiquity, how the Huns facilitated the transmission of political organization of Inner Asian provenance to Western Europe. The impact of this Hunnic intrusion into Europe was profound and contributed to the birth of a new geopolitical reality. In this new world the formerly impoverished and marginal western provinces of the Roman Empire (Western Europe) broke free from the domination of their Mediterranean overlords and embarked on the creation of their own distinctive political and cultural identity in the form of the proto-feudal Frankish Empire/kingdom. The chapter demonstrated the largely ignored and certainly unappreciated role of the Huns in this geopolitical revolution.

Jonathan Karam Skaff's chapter further highlighted the critical impact of Inner Asia on all sub-regions of Eurasia. Although unfortunately not discussed in detail in this volume due to the confines of space, Inner Asians had already interacted intensively with the various empires of China from the famous Han dynasty to the subject matter of this second chapter, the mighty Tang dynasty. Inner Asians were instrumental in the formation of the Tang dynasty itself and as Skaff has capably shown their contribution was critical to the maintenance of Tang imperial dominance in the region.

Selim Ferruh Adalı's third chapter illuminated another even earlier instance of the same phenomenon in West Asia. The Cimmerians and the Scythians (Inner Asian migrants and invaders) radically altered the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. The Cimmerians effectively dismantled the kingdoms of Phrygia and Urartu, while the Scythians had a significant impact on the rise of the Median Empire which played a pivotal role in the dismemberment of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The new geopolitical reality brought about by the fall of the Assyrian superpower was to a large extent the direct consequence of the political and military actions of these early Inner Asians. The Cimmerians and the Scythians, far from being purely destructive, also contributed to the birth of a new model of imperial governance which is highlighted in the final chapter of this volume.

The second section of the book on socio-institutional aspects continues the fine tradition of research on Rome and China pioneered by Walter Scheidel and others. The analysis of the complexities of Roman and Han Chinese perceptions of honour and shame adds an entirely new aspect to the ongoing research in Ancient Rome and Han China comparative studies and invites further inquiry into this richly documented and fascinating

cultural aspect of both foundational empires. One might even take this line of investigation further and compare, for example, the ancient Roman (republican and imperial) and Zhanguo-Han Chinese conceptions and modalities of aristocratic honour and shame with contemporary Inner Asian (Xiongnu and Scythian-Sarmatian) and Iranian (Parthian-Sassanian) aristocratic understandings of honour and shame. This could, perhaps, yield some interesting explanations for the existence of striking commonalities between the ancient Roman and Chinese notions of honour and shame so clearly illuminated in Frederik Juliaan Vervaet's and Mark Lewis' mutually complementary papers. Both studies deliver novel analyses of the honour and shame complexes of republican Rome and ancient China respectively, with a distinct emphasis on the nature and historical significance of honour and shame at the levels of the higher aristocracy and the military, social bodies with a significant voice in high-level decision making processes. Without ignoring the distinctions between both ancient cultures, one cannot but note some striking similarities, most importantly the fact that one cannot fully appreciate their histories and the societal ructions that shaped them without proper acknowledgement of the at times decisive impact of the political and military elite's pervasive sense of honour and shame.

Both papers certainly invite further work in comparing ancient Roman and Chinese honour complexes – for example studying the importance of land in reward for the service of peasant conscripts and the necessity for the Roman and Chinese aristocratic leadership to deliver not being purely a political matter but also an issue of honour or irreparable loss of face. Finally, these chapters also invite the intriguing suspicion that some of the core features of the honour and shame complex may very well be pan-Eurasian rather than purely local, although one should admittedly never underestimate or ignore the particularities and specificities of each specific society's traditional aristocratic codes of honour.

The comparative perspective adopted by Walter Scheidel on those sections of the Roman and Han Chinese population excluded from this elite system of honour and shame (the peasants, the convicts and slaves) has also yielded equally interesting conclusions. The level of elite power and privilege vis-à-vis the state has been shown to have been the decisive factor in determining how labour (free, forced and servile) was exploited in the Roman and Han Chinese empires. It would be germane in the future to compare these observations with how labour was utilized in Iranian, Indian and Inner Asian contexts.

The third section of the book compared the cultural legacies of Eurasian empires, with a focus on religious/semi-religious textual traditions within

Eurasian empires. Alexander Beecroft's comparison of Homer and the Shi Jing, both of which enjoyed canonical status in Hellenistic Greece and China respectively, highlighted how Eurasian empires utilized ancient literature to legitimize contemporary political discourse and socio-cultural orthodoxy. By distorting and reinterpreting long venerated, semi-religious ancient literature these imperial traditions were at the same time conditioned and influenced by the very literature that they had refashioned. What is fascinating is the fact that these imperial revisions and reinterpretations have also informed the ways in which the Modern World has approached ancient literature and assessed the impact of its influence on our contemporary society.

The contribution by Samuel N.C. Lieu drew our perspective back to the centre of Eurasia and demonstrated how interconnected Eurasia actually was during Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. The pan-Eurasian religious phenomenon that was Manichaeism penetrated the borders of multiple imperial states. Its religious textual tradition permeated imperial Rome, Sassanian Persia, Tang China and the Uyghur Khaganate, thereby demonstrating the extraordinary reach of the pan-Eurasian imperial networks which made such diffusion possible.

In the last section on the archaeology of Eurasian empires, the focus again shifted to the key theme of the interaction between the steppe world of Inner Asia and the sedentary world of Eurasia. Antonio Sagona, Claudia Sagona and Aleksandra Michalewicz demonstrated, via the exposition of the latest archaeological evidence from excavations in the Caucasus region, how the material evidence supports the case for intense acculturation, cultural inter-mingling and population movements between the Inner Asian World, West Asia and the Mediterranean. The exploration of the Caucasus region, which constitutes the key land-bridge between all three sub-regions of Eurasia, provided extensive new information on the nature of the contacts between the Inner Asian Alans and Huns and the peoples of the Roman and Iranian spheres of influence.

Osmund Bopearachchi's contribution demonstrated further the significance of Inner Asian expansion across Eurasia with the examination of the fascinating material evidence for cultural and artistic interactions between Inner Asians (Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians and Kushans) and the Greco-Bactrian, Greco-Indian and native Indian cultures in South Asia. The chapter amply demonstrated the extraordinary heterogeneity and pluralism of Eurasian empires. Empires and states of Inner Asian extraction were at the forefront of this cultural intermingling and the forging of a pan-Eurasian cultural synthesis which combined elements of the cultural legacy

and political traditions of the ancient Mediterranean, Iran, Inner Asia and India. The archaeological evidence presented in this chapter further emphasizes the assertion made right at the beginning of this volume that the histories of Eurasian empires can no longer be studied in isolation, but must by necessity be studied holistically from a Eurasian and comparative perspective.

Finally, Michelle Negus Cleary presented startling new archaeological evidence from Central Asia which demonstrates the fallacy of the strict dichotomy of 'settled' and 'nomad' in Inner Asian and Iranian contexts. Through her inquiry she again powerfully demonstrates the heterogeneity of Eurasian empires such as the Kangju, Xiongnu and the Achaemenids. For all three empires it was the infusion of various neighbouring Eurasian imperial traditions which facilitated state building and the moulding of their typically Inner Asian mode of imperial governance. Negus Cleary revealed how the impressive ancient fortified enclosures in historical Khwarezm and Iran were political and ceremonial administrative facilities of Eurasian 'mobile' states built on the essentially Inner Asian model of governance in which the political centre was the itinerant royal court and not a single location.

The research gathered in this volume has barely touched the surface of what promises to be potentially a vast reservoir of future scholarly research. It is hoped that the volume has contributed to the realization that future research on Eurasian empires must be Eurasian in scope and methodology. The comparative and interdisciplinary approach is therefore not an option but a necessity when analysing the various aspects of Ancient and Early Medieval Eurasian Empires.

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The great empires of the vast Eurasian continent have captured the imagination of many. Awe-inspiring names such as ancient Rome, Han and Tang China, Persia, Assyria, the Huns, the Kushans, and the Franks have been the subject of countless scholarly books and works of literature. However, very rarely, if at all, have these vast pre-industrial empires been studied holistically from a comparative, interdisciplinary and above all Eurasian perspective. This collection of studies examines the history, literature and archaeology of these empires and others thus far treated separately as a single inter-connected subject of inquiry. It highlights in particular the critical role of Inner Asian empires and peoples in facilitating contacts and exchange across the Eurasian continent in antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

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